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English Men of Letters

EDITED BY

JOHN MORLEY

VI.

BUNYAN. BY JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

JOHNSON. BY LESLIE STEPHEN

BACON. BY R. W. CHURCH, Dean of St. Paul's

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ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS.

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY.

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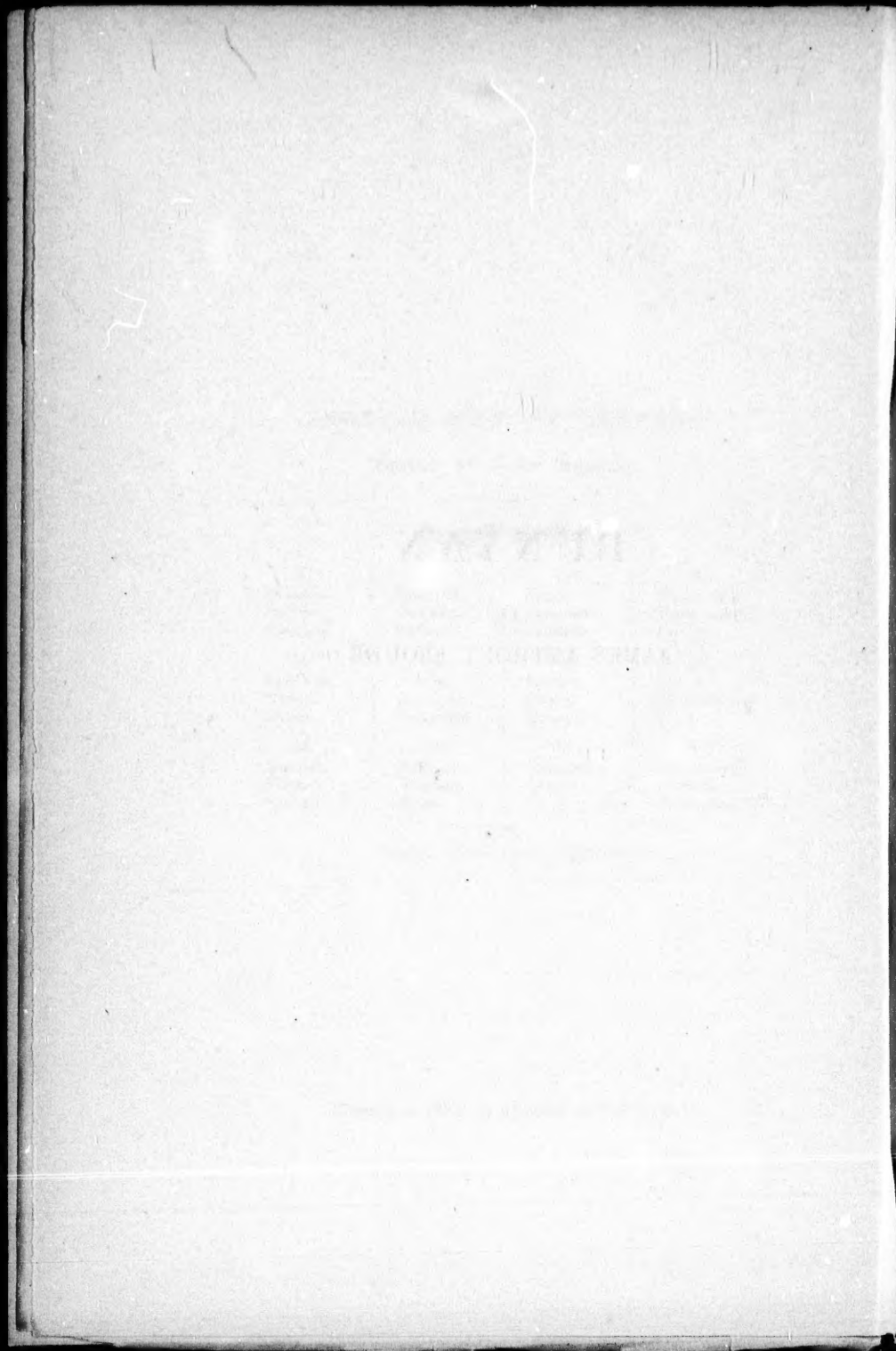
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BUNYAN

BY

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE



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BUNYAN.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

"I WAS of a low and inconsiderable generation, my father's house being of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all families in the land." "I never went to school, to Aristotle or Plato, but was brought up in my father's house in a very mean condition, among a company of poor countrymen." "Nevertheless, I bless God that by this door He brought me into the world to partake of the grace and life that is by Christ in His Gospel." This is the account given of himself and his origin by a man whose writings have for two centuries affected the spiritual opinions of the English race in every part of the world more powerfully than any book or books, except the Bible.

John Bunyan was born at Elstow, a village near Bedford, in the year 1628. It was a memorable epoch in English history, for in that year the House of Commons extorted the consent of Charles I. to the Petition of Right. The stir of politics, however, did not reach the humble household into which the little boy was introduced. His father was hardly occupied in earning bread for his wife and children as a mender of pots and kettles: a tinker—

working in neighbours' houses or at home, at such business as might be brought to him. "The Bunyans," says a friend, "were of the national religion, as men of that calling commonly were." Bunyan himself, in a passage which has been always understood to refer to his father, describes him "as an honest, poor labouring man, who, like Adam unparadised, had all the world to get his bread in, and was very careful to maintain his family." In those days there were no village schools in England; the education of the poor was an apprenticeship to agriculture or handicraft; their religion they learnt at home or in church. Young Bunyan was more fortunate. In Bedford there was a grammar school, which had been founded in Queen Mary's time by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir William Harper. Hither, when he was old enough to walk to and fro, over the mile of road between Elstow and Bedford, the child was sent, if not to learn Aristotle and Plato, to learn at least "to read and write according to the rate of other poor men's children."

If religion was not taught at school, it was taught with some care in the cottages and farmhouses by parents and masters. It was common in many parts of England, as late as the end of the last century, for the farmers to gather their apprentices about them on Sunday afternoons, and to teach them the Catechism. Rude as was Bunyan's home, religious notions of some kind had been early and vividly impressed upon him. He caught, indeed, the ordinary habits of the boys among whom he was thrown. He learnt to use bad language, and he often lied. When a child's imagination is exceptionally active, the temptations to untruth are correspondingly powerful. The inventive faculty has its dangers, and Bunyan was eminently gifted in that way. He was a violent, passionate boy be-

sides, and thus he says of himself that for lying and swearing he had no equal, and that his parents did not sufficiently correct him. Wickedness, he declares in his own remorseful story of his early years, became a second nature to him. But the estimate which a man forms of himself in later life, if he has arrived at any strong abhorrence of moral evil, is harsher than others at the time would have been likely to have formed. Even then the poor child's conscience must have been curiously sensitive, and it revenged itself upon him in singular tortures.

"My sins," he says, "did so offend the Lord that even in my childhood He did scare and affright me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with dreadful visions. I have been in my bed greatly afflicted while asleep, with apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid. I was afflicted with thoughts of the Day of Judgment night and day, trembling at the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell fire." When, at ten years old, he was running about with his companions in "his sports and childish vanities," these terrors continually recurred to him, yet "he would not let go his sins."

Such a boy required rather to be encouraged than checked in seeking innocent amusements. Swearing and lying were definite faults which ought to have been corrected; but his parents, perhaps, saw that there was something unusual in the child. To them he probably appeared not worse than other boys, but considerably better. They may have thought it more likely that he would conquer his own bad inclinations by his own efforts, than that they could mend him by rough rebukes.

When he left school he would naturally have been bound apprentice, but his father brought him up at his

own trade. Thus he lived at home, and grew to manhood there, forming his ideas of men and things out of such opportunities as the Elstow neighbourhood afforded.

From the time when the Reformation brought them a translation of it, the Bible was the book most read—it was often the only book which was read—in humble English homes. Familiarity with the words had not yet trampled the sacred writings into practical barrenness. No doubts or questions had yet risen about the Bible's nature or origin. It was received as the authentic word of God Himself. The Old and New Testament alike represented the world as the scene of a struggle between good and evil spirits; and thus every ordinary incident of daily life was an instance or illustration of God's providence. This was the universal popular belief, not admitted only by the intellect, but accepted and realised by the imagination. No one questioned it, save a few speculative philosophers in their closets. The statesman in the House of Commons, the judge on the Bench, the peasant in a midland village, interpreted literally by this rule the phenomena which they experienced or saw. They not only believed that God had miraculously governed the Israelites, but they believed that as directly and immediately He governed England in the seventeenth century. They not only believed that there had been a witch at Endor, but they believed that there were witches in their own villages, who had made compacts with the devil himself. They believed that the devil still literally walked the earth like a roaring lion; that he and the evil angels were perpetually labouring to destroy the souls of men; and that God was equally busy overthrowing the devil's work, and bringing sin and crimes to eventual punishment.

In this light the common events of life were actually

looked at and understood, and the air was filled with anecdotes so told as to illustrate the belief. These stories and these experiences were Bunyan's early mental food. One of them, which had deeply impressed the imagination of the Midland counties, was the story of "Old Tod." This man came one day into court, in the Summer Assizes at Bedford, "all in a dung sweat," to demand justice upon himself as a felon. No one had accused him, but God's judgment was not to be escaped, and he was forced to accuse himself. "My Lord," said Old Tod to the judge, "I have been a thief from my childhood. I have been a thief ever since. There has not been a robbery committed these many years, within so many miles of this town, but I have been privy to it." The judge, after a conference, agreed to indict him of certain felonies which he had acknowledged. He pleaded guilty, implicating his wife along with him, and they were both hanged.

An intense belief in the moral government of the world creates what it insists upon. Horror at sin forces the sinner to confess it, and makes others eager to punish it. "God's revenge against murder and adultery" becomes thus an actual fact, and justifies the conviction in which it rises. Bunyan was specially attentive to accounts of judgments upon swearing, to which he was himself addicted. He tells a story of a man at Wimbledon, who, after uttering some strange blasphemy, was struck with sickness, and died cursing. Another such scene he probably witnessed himself,¹ and never forgot. An alehouse-keeper in the neighbourhood of Elstow had a son who was half-witted. The favourite amusement, when a party was collected drink-

¹ The story is told by Mr. Attentive in the *Life of Mr. Badman*; but it is almost certain that Bunyan was relating his own experience.

ing, was for the father to provoke the lad's temper, and for the lad to curse his father and wish the devil had him. The devil at last did have the alehouse-keeper, and rent and tore him till he died. "I," says Bunyan, "was eye and ear witness of what I here say. I have heard Ned in his roguery cursing his father, and his father laughing thereat most heartily, still provoking of Ned to curse that his mirth might be increased. I saw his father also when he was possessed. I saw him in one of his fits, and saw his flesh as it was thought gathered up in a heap about the bigness of half an egg, to the unutterable torture and affliction of the old man. There was also one Freeman, who was more than an ordinary doctor, sent for to cast out the devil, and I was there when he attempted to do it. The manner whereof was this. They had the possessed in an outroom, and laid him upon his belly upon a form, with his head hanging down over the form's end. Then they bound him down thereto; which done, they set a pan of coals under his mouth, and put something therein which made a great smoke—by this means, as it was said, to fetch out the devil. There they kept the man till he was almost smothered in the smoke, but no devil came out of him, at which Freeman was somewhat abashed, the man greatly afflicted, and I made to go away wondering and fearing. In a little time, therefore, that which possessed the man carried him out of the world, according to the cursed wishes of his son."

The wretched alehouse-keeper's life was probably sacrificed in this attempt to dispossess the devil. But the incident would naturally leave its mark on the mind of an impressionable boy. Bunyan ceased to frequent such places after he began to lead a religious life. The story, therefore, most likely belongs to the experiences of his first

youth after he left school ; and there may have been many more of a similar kind, for, except that he was steady at his trade, he grew up a wild lad, the ringleader of the village apprentices in all manner of mischief. He had no books, except a life of Sir Bevis of Southampton, which would not tend to sober him ; indeed, he soon forgot all that he had learnt at school, and took to amusements and doubtful adventures, orchard-robbing, perhaps, or poaching, since he hints that he might have brought himself within reach of the law. In the most passionate language of self-abhorrence, he accuses himself of all manner of sins, yet it is improbable that he appeared to others what in later life he appeared to himself. He judged his own conduct as he believed that it was regarded by his Maker, by whom he supposed eternal torment to have been assigned as the just retribution for the lightest offence. Yet he was never drunk. He who never forgot anything with which he could charge himself, would not have passed over drunkenness, if he could remember that he had been guilty of it ; and he distinctly asserts, also, that he was never in a single instance unchaste. In our days, a rough tinker who could say as much for himself after he had grown to manhood would be regarded as a model of self-restraint. If, in Bedford and the neighbourhood, there was no young man more vicious than Bunyan, the moral standard of an English town in the seventeenth century must have been higher than believers in Progress will be pleased to allow.

He declares that he was without God in the world, and in the sense which he afterwards attached to the word this was probably true. But serious thoughts seldom ceased to work in him. Dreams only reproduce the forms and feelings with which the waking imagination is most engaged. Bunyan's rest continued to be haunted with the

phantoms which had terrified him when a child. He started in his sleep, and frightened the family with his cries. He saw evil spirits in monstrous shapes, and fiends blowing flames out of their nostrils. "Once," says a biographer, who knew him well, and had heard the story of his visions from his own lips, "he dreamed that he saw the face of heaven as it were on fire, the firmament crackling and shivering with the noise of mighty thunder, and an archangel flew in the midst of heaven, sounding a trumpet, and a glorious throne was seated in the east, whereon sat One in brightness like the morning star. Upon which he, thinking it was the end of the world, fell upon his knees and said, 'Oh, Lord, have mercy on me! What shall I do? The Day of Judgment is come, and I am not prepared.'"

At another time "he dreamed that he was in a pleasant place jovial and rioting, when an earthquake rent the earth, out of which came bloody flames, and the figures of men tossed up in globes of fire, and falling down again with horrible cries and shrieks and execrations, while devils mingled among them, and laughed aloud at their torments. As he stood trembling, the earth sank under him, and a circle of flames embraced him. But when he fancied he was at the point to perish, One in shining white raiment descended and plucked him out of that dreadful place, while the devils cried after him to take him to the punishment which his sins had deserved. Yet he escaped the danger, and leapt for joy when he awoke and found it was a dream."

Mr. Southey, who thinks wisely that Bunyan's biographers have exaggerated his early faults, considers that at worst he was a sort of "blackguard." This, too, is a wrong word. Young village blackguards do not dream of archangels flying through the midst of heaven, nor were

these imaginations invented afterwards, or rhetorically exaggerated. Bunyan was undoubtedly given to story-telling as a boy, and the recollection of it made him peculiarly scrupulous in his statements in later life. One trait he mentions of himself which no one would have thought of who had not experienced the feeling, yet every person can understand it and sympathise with it. These spectres and hobgoblins drove him wild. He says, "I was so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that I should often wish either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil; supposing that they were only tormentors, and that, if it must needs be that I went thither, I might be rather a tormentor than tormented myself."

The visions at last ceased. God left him to himself, as he puts it, and gave him over to his own wicked inclinations. He fell, he says, into all kinds of vice and ungodliness without further check. The expression is very strong, yet when we look for particulars we can find only that he was fond of games which Puritan preciseness disapproved. He had high animal spirits, and engaged in lawless enterprises. Once or twice he nearly lost his life. He is sparing of details of his outward history, for he regarded it as nothing but vanity; but his escapes from death were providences, and therefore he mentions them. He must have gone to the coast somewhere, for he was once almost drowned in a creek of the sea. He fell out of a boat into the river at another time, and it seems that he could not swim. Afterwards he seized hold of an adder, and was not bitten by it. These mercies were sent as warnings, but he says that he was too careless to profit by them. He thought that he had forgotten God altogether, and yet it is plain that he had not forgotten. A bad young man, who has shaken off religion because it is

a restraint, observes with malicious amusement the faults of persons who make a profession of religion. He infers that they do not really believe it, and only differ from their neighbours in being hypocrites. Bunyan notes this disposition in his own history of Mr. Badman. Of himself he says: "Though I could sin with delight and ease, and take pleasure in the villanies of my companions, even then, if I saw wicked things done by them that professed goodness, it would make my spirit tremble. Once, when I was in the height of my vanity, hearing one swear that was reckoned a religious man, it made my heart to ache."

He was now seventeen, and we can form a tolerably accurate picture of him—a tall, active lad, working as his father's apprentice at his pots and kettles, ignorant of books, and with no notion of the world beyond what he could learn in his daily drudgery, and the talk of the ale-house and the village green; inventing lies to amuse his companions, and swearing that they were true; playing bowls and tiptoe, ready for any reckless action, and always a leader in it, yet all the while singularly pure from the more brutal forms of vice, and haunted with feverish thoughts, which he tried to forget in amusements. It has been the fashion to take his account of himself literally, and represent him as the worst of reprobates, in order to magnify the effects of his conversion, and perhaps to make intelligible to his admiring followers the reproaches which he heaps upon himself. They may have felt that they could not be wrong in explaining his own language in the only sense in which they could attach a meaning to it. Yet, sinner though he may have been, like all the rest of us, his sins were not the sins of coarseness and vulgarity. They were the sins of a youth of sensitive nature and very peculiar gifts—gifts which brought special temptations

with them, and inclined him to be careless and desperate, yet from causes singularly unlike those which are usually operative in dissipated and uneducated boys.

It was now the year 1645. Naseby Field was near, and the first Civil War was drawing to its close. At this crisis Bunyan was, as he says, drawn to be a soldier; and it is extremely characteristic of him and of the body to which he belonged, that he leaves us to guess on which side he served. He does not tell us himself. His friends in after-life did not care to ask him, or he to inform them, or else they also thought the matter of too small importance to be worth mentioning with exactness. There were two traditions, and his biographers chose between them as we do. Close as the connection was in that great struggle between civil and religious liberty—flung as Bunyan was flung into the very centre of the conflict between the English people and the Crown and Church and aristocracy—victim as he was himself of intolerance and persecution, he never but once took any political part, and then only in signing an address to Cromwell. He never showed any active interest in political questions; and if he spoke on such questions at all after the Restoration, it was to advise submission to the Stuart Government. By the side of the stupendous issues of human life, such miserable *rights* as men might pretend to in this world were not worth contending for. The only *right* of man that he thought much about, was the right to be eternally damned if he did not lay hold of grace. King and subject were alike creatures, whose sole significance lay in their individual immortal souls. Their relations with one another upon earth were nothing in the presence of the awful judgment which awaited them both. Thus, whether Bunyan's brief career in the army was under Charles or under Fairfax must re-

main doubtful. Probability is on the side of his having been with the Royalists. His father was of "the national religion." He himself had as yet no special convictions of his own. John Gifford, the Baptist minister at Bedford, had been a Royalist. The only incident which Bunyan speaks of connected with his military experience points in the same direction. "When I was a soldier," he says, "I was with others drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it. But when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room. Coming to the siege as he stood sentinel he was shot in the heart with a musket bullet and died." Tradition agrees that the place to which these words refer was Leicester. Leicester was stormed by the King's troops a few days before the battle of Naseby. It was recovered afterwards by the Parliamentarians, but on the second occasion there was no fighting, as it capitulated without a shot being fired. Mr. Carlyle supposes that Bunyan was not with the attacking party, but was in the town as one of the garrison, and was taken prisoner there. But this cannot be, for he says expressly that he was one of the besiegers. Legend gathers freely about eminent men, about men especially who are eminent in religion, whether they are Catholic or Protestant. Lord Macaulay is not only positive that the hero of the English Dissenters fought on the side of the Commonwealth, but he says, without a word of caution on the imperfection of the evidence, "His Greatheart, his Captain Boanerges, and his Captain Credence, are evidently portraits of which the originals were among those martial saints who fought and expounded in Fairfax's army."¹

If the martial saints had impressed Bunyan so deeply,

¹ *Life of Bunyan*: Collected Works, vol. vii. p. 299.

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it is inconceivable that he should have made no more allusion to his military service than in this brief passage. He refers to the siege and all connected with it merely as another occasion of his own providential escapes from death.

Let the truth of this be what it may, the troop to which he belonged was soon disbanded. He returned at the end of the year to his tinker's work at Elstow much as he had left it. The saints, if he had met with saints, had not converted him. "I sinned still," he says, "and grew more and more rebellious against God and careless of my own salvation." An important change of another kind, however, lay before him. Young as he was, he married. His friends advised it, for they thought that marriage would make him steady. The step was less imprudent than it would have been had Bunyan been in a higher rank of life, or had aimed at rising into it. The girl whom he chose was a poor orphan, but she had been carefully and piously brought up, and from her acceptance of him, something more may be inferred about his character. Had he been a dissolute, idle scamp, it is unlikely that a respectable woman would have become his wife when he was a mere boy. His sins, whatever these were, had not injured his outward circumstances; it is clear that all along he worked skilfully and industriously at his tinkering business. He had none of the habits which bring men to beggary. From the beginning of his life to the end of it he was a prudent, careful man, and, considering the station to which he belonged, a very successful man.

"I lighted on a wife," he says, "whose father was counted godly. We came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household stuff as a dish or a spoon between us. But she had for her portion two

books, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*, which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I sometimes read with her. I found some things pleasing to me, but all this while I met with no conviction. She often told me what a godly man her father was; how he would reprove and correct vice both in his house and among his neighbours; what a strict and holy life he lived in his day, both in word and deed. These books, though they did not reach my heart, did light in me some desire to religion."

There was still an Established Church in England, and the constitution of it had not yet been altered. The Presbyterian platform threatened to take the place of Episcopacy, and soon did take it; but the clergyman was still a priest, and was still regarded with pious veneration in the country districts as a semi-supernatural being. The altar yet stood in its place, the minister still appeared in his surplice, and the Prayers of the Liturgy continued to be read or intoned. The old familiar bells, Catholic as they were in all the emotions which they suggested, called the congregation together with their musical peal, though in the midst of triumphant Puritanism. The *Book of Sports*, which, under an order from Charles I., had been read regularly in Church, had in 1644 been laid under a ban; but the gloom of a Presbyterian Sunday was, is, and for ever will be detestable to the natural man; and the Elstow population gathered persistently after service on the village green for their dancing, and their leaping, and their archery. Long habit cannot be transformed in a day by an Edict of Council, and amidst army manifestoes and battles of Marston Moor, and a king dethroned and imprisoned, old English life in Bedfordshire preserved its familiar features. These Sunday sports had been a special

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delight to Bunyan, and it is to them which he refers in the following passage, when speaking of his persistent wickedness. On his marriage he became regular and respectable in his habits. He says, "I fell in with the religion of the times to go to church twice a day, very devoutly to say and sing as the others did, yet retaining my wicked life. Withal I was so overrun with the spirit of superstition that I adored with great devotion even all things, both the high place, priest, clerk, vestment, service, and what else belonging to the Church, counting all things holy therein contained, and especially the priest and clerk most happy and without doubt greatly blessed. This conceit grew so strong in my spirit that had I but seen a priest, though never so sordid and debauched in his life, I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence, and be knit to him—their name, their garb, and work did so intoxicate and bewitch me."

Surely if there were no other evidence, these words would show that the writer of them had never listened to the expositions of the martial saints.

CHAPTER II.

CONVICTION OF SIN.

The Pilgrim's Progress is the history of the struggle of human nature to overcome temptation and shake off the bondage of sin, under the convictions which prevailed among serious men in England in the seventeenth century. The allegory is the life of its author cast in an imaginative form. Every step in Christian's journey had been first trodden by Bunyan himself; every pang of fear and shame, every spasm of despair, every breath of hope and consolation, which is there described, is but a reflexion as on a mirror from personal experience. It has spoken to the hearts of all later generations of Englishmen because it came from the heart; because it is the true record of the genuine emotions of a human soul; and to such a record the emotions of other men will respond, as one stringed instrument vibrates responsively to another. The poet's power lies in creating sympathy; but he cannot, however richly gifted, stir feelings which he has not himself known in all their intensity.

"Ut ridentibus arident ita flentibus adflent
Humani vultus. Si vis me flere dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi."

The religious history of man is essentially the same in all ages. It takes its rise in the duality of his nature. He

is an animal, and as an animal he desires bodily pleasure and shrinks from bodily pain. As a being capable of morality, he is conscious that for him there exists a right and wrong. Something, whatever that something may be, binds him to choose one and avoid the other. This is his religion, his religio, his obligation, in the sense in which the Romans, from whom we take it, used the word; and obligation implies some superior power to which man owes obedience. The conflict between his two dispositions agitates his heart and perplexes his intellect. To do what the superior power requires of him, he must thwart his inclinations. He dreads punishment, if he neglects to do it. He invents methods by which he can indulge his appetites, and finds a substitute by which he can propitiate his invisible ruler or rulers. He offers sacrifices; he institutes ceremonies and observances. This is the religion of the body, the religion of fear. It is what we call superstition. In his nobler moods he feels that this is but to evade the difficulty. He perceives that the sacrifice required is the sacrifice of himself. It is not the penalty for sin which he must fear, but the sin itself. He must conquer his own lower nature. He must detach his heart from his pleasures, and he must love good for its own sake, and because it is his only real good; and this is spiritual religion or piety. Between these two forms of worship of the unseen, the human race has swayed to and fro from the first moment in which they learnt to discern between good and evil. Superstition attracts, because it is indulgent to immorality by providing means by which God can be pacified. But it carries its antidote along with it, for it keeps alive the sense of God's existence; and when it has produced its natural effects, when the believer rests in his observances and lives practically as if

there was no God at all, the conscience again awakes. Sacrifices and ceremonies become detested as idolatry, and religion becomes conviction of sin, a fiery determination to fight with the whole soul against appetite, vanity, self-seeking, and every mean propensity which the most sensitive alarm can detect. The battle unhappily is attended with many vicissitudes. The victory, though practically it may be won, is never wholly won. The struggle brings with it every variety of emotion, alternations of humility and confidence, despondency and hope. The essence of it is always the same—the effort of the higher nature to overcome the lower. The form of it varies from period to period, according to the conditions of the time, the temperament of different people, the conception of the character of the Supreme Power, which the state of knowledge enables men to form. It will be found even when the puzzled intellect can see no light in Heaven at all, in the stern and silent fulfilment of moral duty. It will appear as enthusiasm; it will appear as asceticism; it will appear wherever there is courage to sacrifice personal enjoyment for a cause believed to be holy. We must all live. We must all, as we suppose, in one shape or other, give account for our actions; and accounts of the conflict are most individually interesting when it is an open wrestle with the enemy; as we find in the penances and austerities of the Catholic saints, or when the difficulties of belief are confessed and detailed, as in David's Psalms, or in the Epistles of St. Paul. St. Paul, like the rest of mankind, found a law in his members warring against the law which was in his heart. The problem presented to him was how one was to be brought into subjection to the other, and the solution was by "the putting on of Christ." St. Paul's mind was charged with

the ideas of Oriental and Greek philosophy then prevalent in the Roman Empire. His hearers understood him, because he spoke in the language of the prevailing speculations. We who have not the clue cannot, perhaps, perfectly understand him; but his words have been variously interpreted as human intelligence has expanded, and have formed the basis of the two great theologies which have been developed out of Christianity. The Christian religion taught that evil could not be overcome by natural human strength. The Son of God had come miraculously upon earth, had lived a life of stainless purity, and had been offered as a sacrifice to redeem men conditionally from the power of sin. The conditions, as English Protestant theology understands them, are nowhere more completely represented than in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The Catholic theology, rising as it did in the two centuries immediately following St. Paul, approached, probably, nearer to what he really intended to say.

Catholic theology, as a system, is a development of Platonism. The Platonists had discovered that the seat of moral evil was material substance. In matter, and therefore in the human body, there was either some inherent imperfection, or some ingrained perversity and antagonism to good. The soul, so long as it was attached to the body, was necessarily infected by it; and as human life on earth consisted in the connection of soul and body, every single man was necessarily subject to infirmity. Catholic theology accepted the position and formulated an escape from it. The evil in matter was a fact. It was explained by Adam's sin. But there it was. The taint was inherited by all Adam's posterity. The flesh of man was incurably vitiated, and if he was to be saved, a new body must be prepared for him. This Christ had done.

That Christ's body was not as other men's bodies was proved after his resurrection, when it showed itself independent of the limitations of extended substance. In virtue of these mysterious properties, it became the body of the Corporate Church, into which believers were admitted by baptism. The natural body was not at once destroyed, but a new element was introduced into it, by the power of which, assisted by penance, and mortification, and the spiritual food of the Eucharist, the grosser qualities were gradually subdued, and the corporeal system was changed. Then body and spirit became alike pure together, and the saint became capable of obedience, so perfect as not only to suffice for himself, but to supply the wants of others. The corruptible put on incorruption. The bodies of the saints worked miracles, and their flesh was found unaffected by decay after hundreds of years.

This belief, so long as it was sincerely held, issued naturally in characters of extreme beauty—of beauty so great as almost to demonstrate its truth. The purpose of it, so far as it affected action, was self-conquest. Those who try with their whole souls to conquer themselves find the effort lightened by a conviction that they are receiving supernatural assistance; and the form in which the Catholic theory supposed the assistance to be given was at least perfectly innocent. But it is in the nature of human speculations, though they may have been entertained at first in entire good faith, to break down under trial, if they are not in conformity with fact. Catholic theology furnished Europe with a rule of faith and action which lasted 1500 years. For the last three centuries of that period it was changing from a religion into a superstition, till, from being the world's guide, it became its scandal. "The body of Christ" had become a kingdom of this

world, insulting its subjects by the effrontery of its ministers, the insolence of its pretensions, the mountains of lies which it was teaching as sacred truths. Luther spoke; and over half the Western world the Catholic Church collapsed, and a new theory and Christianity had to be constructed out of the fragments of it.

There was left behind a fixed belief in God and in the Bible as His revealed word, in a future judgment, in the fall of man, in the atonement made for sin by the death of Christ, and in the new life which was made possible by His resurrection. The change was in the conception of the method by which the atonement was imagined to be efficacious. The material or sacramental view of it, though it lingered inconsistently in the mind even of Luther himself, was substantially gone. New ideas adopted in enthusiasm are necessarily extreme. The wrath of God was held to be inseparably and eternally attached to every act of sin, however infirm the sinner. That his nature could be changed, and that he could be mystically strengthened by incorporation with Christ's body in the Church, was contrary to experience, and was no longer credible. The conscience of every man, in the Church or out of it, told him that he was daily and hourly offending. God's law demanded a life of perfect obedience, eternal death being the penalty of the lightest breach of it. No human being was capable of such perfect obedience. He could not do one single act which would endure so strict a scrutiny. All mankind were thus included under sin. The Catholic Purgatory was swept away. It had degenerated into a contrivance for feeding the priests with money, and it implied that human nature could in itself be renovated by its own sufferings. Thus nothing lay before the whole race except everlasting reprobation. But the door of hope had

been opened on the cross of Christ. Christ had done what man could never do. He had fulfilled the law perfectly. God was ready to accept Christ's perfect righteousness as a substitute for the righteousness which man was required to present to him, but could not. The conditions of acceptance were no longer sacraments or outward acts, or lame and impotent efforts after a moral life, but faith in what Christ had done; a complete self-abnegation, a resigned consciousness of utter unworthiness, and an unreserved acceptance of the mercy held out through the Atonement. It might have been thought that since man was born so weak that it was impossible for him to do what the law required, consideration would be had for his infirmity; that it was even dangerous to attribute to the Almighty a character so arbitrary as that He would exact an account from his creatures which the creature's necessary inadequacy rendered him incapable of meeting. But the impetuosity of the new theology would listen to no such excuses. God was infinitely pure, and nothing impure could stand in his sight. Man, so long as he rested on merit of his own, must be for ever excluded from his presence. He must accept grace on the terms on which it was held out to him; then, and then only, God would extend his pity to him. He was no longer a child of wrath: he was God's child. His infirmities remained, but they were constantly obliterated by the merits of Christ. And he had strength given to him, partially, at least, to overcome temptation, under which, but for that strength, he would have fallen. Though nothing which he could do could deserve reward, yet he received grace in proportion to the firmness of his belief; and his efforts after obedience, imperfect though they might be, were accepted for Christ's sake. A good life, or a constant effort after a good life,

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was still the object which a man was bound to labour after. Though giving no claim to pardon, still less for reward, it was the necessary fruit of a sense of what Christ had done, and of love and gratitude towards him. Good works were the test of saving faith; and if there were no signs of them, the faith was barren: it was not real faith at all.

This was the Puritan belief in England in the seventeenth century. The reason starts at it, but all religion is paradoxical to reason. God hates sin, yet sin exists. He is omnipotent, yet evil is not overcome. The will of man is free, or there can be no guilt; yet the action of the will, so far as experience can throw light on its operation, is as much determined by antecedent causes as every other natural force. Prayer is addressed to a Being assumed to be omniscient; who knows better what is good for us than we can know; who sees our thoughts without requiring to hear them in words; whose will is fixed and cannot be changed. Prayer, therefore, in the eye of reason, is an impertinence. The Puritan theology is not more open to objection on the ground of unreasonableness than the Catholic theology, or any other which regards man as answerable to God for his conduct. We must judge of a creed by its effects on character, as we judge of the wholesomeness of food as it conduces to bodily health. And the creed which swept like a wave through England at that time, and recommended itself to the noblest and most powerful intellects, produced also in those who accepted it a horror of sin, an enthusiasm for justice, purity, and manliness, which can be paralleled only in the first age of Christianity. Certainly there never was such a theory to take man's conceit out of him. He was a miserable wretch, so worthless at his best as to deserve everlasting perdition. If he was to be saved at all, he could be saved only by the unmerited

grace of God. In himself he was a child of the devil; and hell, not in metaphor, but in hard and palpable fact, inevitably waited for him. This belief, or the affectation of this belief, continues to be professed, but without a realisation of its tremendous meaning. The form of words is repeated by multitudes who do not care to think what they are saying. Who can measure the effect of such a conviction upon men who were in earnest about their souls, who were assured that this account of their situation was actually true, and on whom, therefore, it bore with increasing weight in proportion to their sincerity?

With these few prefatory words, I now return to Bunyan. He had begun to go regularly to church, and by church he meant the Church of England. The change in the constitution of it, even when it came, did not much alter its practical character in the country districts. At Elstow, as we have seen, there was still a high place; there was still a liturgy; there was still a surplice. The Church of England is a compromise between the old theology and the new. The Bishops have the apostolical succession, but many of them disbelieve that they derive any virtue from it. The clergyman is either a priest who can absolve men from sins, or he is a minister, as in other Protestant communions. The sacraments are either means of grace or mere outward signs. A Christian is either saved by baptism or saved by faith, as he pleases to believe. In either case he may be a member of the Church of England. The effect of such uncertain utterances is to leave an impression that, in defining such points closely, theologians are laying down lines of doctrines about subjects of which they know nothing, that the real truth of religion lies in what is common to the two theories, the obligation to lead a moral life; and to this sensible view of their functions

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the bishops and clergy had, in fact, gradually arrived in the last century, when the revival of what is called earnestness, first in the form of Evangelicalism, and then of Anglo-Catholicism, awoke again the old controversies.

To a man of fervid temperament suddenly convinced of sin, incapable of being satisfied with ambiguous answers to questions which mean life or death to him, the Church of England has little to say. If he is quiet and reasonable, he finds in it all that he desires. Enthusiastic ages and enthusiastical temperaments demand something more complete and consistent. The clergy under the Long Parliament caught partially the tone of the prevailing spirit. The reading of the *Book of Sports* had been interdicted, and from their pulpits they lectured their congregations on the ungodliness of the Sabbath amusements. But the congregations were slow to listen, and the sports went on.

One Sunday morning, when Bunyan was at church with his wife, a sermon was delivered on this subject. It seemed to be especially addressed to himself, and it much affected him. He shook off the impression, and after dinner he went as usual to the green. He was on the point of striking at a ball when the thought rushed across his mind, Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell? He looked up. The reflection of his own emotion was before him in visible form. He imagined that he saw Christ himself looking down at him from the sky. But he concluded that it was too late for him to repent. He was past pardon. He was sure to be damned, and he might as well be damned for many sins as for few. Sin, at all events, was pleasant, the only pleasant thing that he knew; therefore he would take his fill of it. The sin was the game, and nothing but the game. He

continued to play, but the Puritan sensitiveness had taken hold of him. An artificial offence had become a real offence when his conscience was wounded by it. He was reckless and desperate.

"This temptation of the devil," he says, "is more usual among poor creatures than many are aware of. It continued with me about a month or more; but one day, as I was standing at a neighbour's shop-window, and there cursing and swearing after my wonted manner, there sat within the woman of the house and heard me, who, though she was a loose and ungodly wretch, protested that I swore and cursed at such a rate that she trembled to hear me. I was able to spoil all the youths in a whole town. At this reproof I was silenced and put to secret shame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of heaven. I stood hanging down my head, and wishing that I might be a little child, that my father might learn me to speak without this wicked sin of swearing; for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it that it is vain to think of a reformation."

These words have been sometimes taken as a reflection on Bunyan's own father, as if he had not sufficiently checked the first symptoms of a bad habit. If this was so, too much may be easily made of it. The language in the homes of ignorant workmen is seldom select. They have not a large vocabulary, and the words which they use do not mean what they seem to mean. But so sharp and sudden remorse speaks remarkably for Bunyan himself. At this time he could have been barely twenty years old, and already he was quick to see when he was doing wrong, to be sorry for it, and to wish that he could do better. Vain the effort seemed to him, yet from that moment "he did leave off swearing, to his own great won-

der;" and he found "that he could speak better and more pleasantly than he did before."

It lies in the nature of human advance on the road of improvement, that, whatever be a man's occupation, be it handicraft, or art, or knowledge, or moral conquest of self, at each forward step which he takes he grows more conscious of his shortcomings. It is thus with his whole career, and those who rise highest are least satisfied with themselves. Very simply Bunyan tells the story of his progress. On his outward history, on his business and his fortunes with it, he is totally silent. Worldly interests were not worth mentioning. He is solely occupied with his rescue from spiritual perdition. Soon after he had profited by the woman's rebuke, he fell in "with a poor man that made profession of religion and talked pleasantly of the Scriptures." Earnestness in such matters was growing common among English labourers. Under his new friend's example, Bunyan "betook him to the Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading it," but especially, as he admits frankly (and most people's experience will have been the same), "the historical part; for as for St. Paul's Epistles and Scriptures of that nature, he could not away with them, being as yet ignorant of the corruption of his nature, or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save him."

Not as yet understanding these mysteries, he set himself to reform his life. He became strict with himself in word and deed. "He set the Commandments before him for his way to heaven." "He thought if he could but keep them pretty well he should have comfort." If now and then he broke one of them, he suffered in conscience; he repented of his fault; he made good resolutions for the future, and struggled to carry them out. "His neighbours

took him to be a new man, and marvelled at the alteration." Pleasure of any kind, even the most innocent, he considered to be a snare to him, and he abandoned it. He had been fond of dancing, but he gave it up. Music and singing he parted with, though it distressed him to leave them. Of all amusements, that in which he had most delighted had been in ringing the bells in Elstow church tower. With his bells he could not part all at once. He would no longer ring himself: but when his friends were enjoying themselves with the ropes, he could not help going now and then to the tower door to look on and listen; but he feared at last that the steeple might fall upon him and kill him. We call such scruples in these days exaggerated and fantastic. We are no longer in danger ourselves of suffering from similar emotions. Whether we are the better for having got rid of them will be seen in the future history of our race.

Notwithstanding his struggles and his sacrifices, Bunyan found that they did not bring him the peace which he expected. A man can change his outward conduct; but if he is in earnest, he comes in sight of other features in himself which he cannot change so easily—the meannesses, the paltrinesses, the selfishnesses which haunt him in spite of himself, which start out upon him at moments the most unlooked for, which taint the best of his actions and make him loathe and hate himself. Bunyan's life was now, for so young a person, a model of correctness; but he had no sooner brought his actions straight than he discovered that he was admiring and approving of himself. No situation is more humiliating, none brings with it a feeling of more entire hopelessness. "All this while," he says, "I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope; and had I then died, my state had been most fearful. I was but a poor

painted hypocrite, going about to establish my own righteousness."

Like his own Pilgrim, he had the burden on his back of his conscious unworthiness. How was he to be rid of it?

"One day, in a street in Bedford, as he was at work in his calling, he fell in with three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun talking about the things of God." He was himself at that time "a brisk talker" about the matters of religion, and he joined these women. Their expressions were wholly unintelligible to him. "They were speaking of the wretchedness of their own hearts, of their unbelief, of their miserable state. They did condemn, slight, and abhor their own righteousness as filthy and insufficient to do them any good. They spoke of a new birth and of the work of God in their hearts, which comforted and strengthened them against the temptations of the devil."

The language of the poor women has lost its old meaning. They themselves, if they were alive, would not use it any longer. The conventional phrases of Evangelical Christianity ring untrue in a modern ear like a cracked bell. We have grown so accustomed to them as a cant, that we can hardly believe that they ever stood for sincere convictions. Yet these forms were once alive with the profoundest of all moral truths—a truth not of a narrow theology, but which lies at the very bottom of the well, at the fountain-head of human morality; namely, that a man who would work out his salvation must cast out self, though he rend his heart-strings in doing it; not love of self-indulgence only, but self-applause, self-confidence, self-conceit and vanity, desire or expectation of reward; self in all the subtle ingenuities with which it winds about the soul. In one dialect or another, he must recognize that

he is himself a poor creature not worth thinking of, or he will not take the first step towards excellence in any single thing which he undertakes.

Bunyan left the women and went about his work, but their talk went with him. "He was greatly affected." "He saw that he wanted the true tokens of a godly man." He sought them out, and spoke with them again and again. He could not stay away; and the more he went, the more he questioned his condition.

"I found two things," he says, "at which I did sometimes marvel, considering what a blind, ungodly wretch but just before I was; one, a great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fall under the conviction of what, by Scripture, they asserted; the other, a great bending of my mind to a continual meditating on it. My mind was now like a horse-leech at the vein, still crying, Give, give; so fixed on eternity and on the kingdom of heaven (though I knew but little), that neither pleasure, nor profit, nor persuasion, nor threats could loosen it or make it let go its hold. It is in very deed a certain truth; it would have been then as difficult for me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often since to get it from earth to heaven."

Ordinary persons who are conscious of trying to do right, who resist temptations, are sorry when they slip, and determine to be more on their guard for the future, are well contented with the condition which they have reached. They are respectable; they are right-minded in common things; they fulfil their every-day duties to their families and to society with a sufficiency for which the world speaks well of them, as indeed it ought to speak; and they themselves acquiesce in the world's verdict. Any passionate agitation about the state of their souls they

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consider unreal and affected. Such men may be amiable in private life, good neighbours, and useful citizens; but be their talents what they may, they could not write a *Pilgrim's Progress*, or ever reach the Delectable Mountains, or even be conscious that such mountains exist.

Bunyan was on the threshold of the higher life. He knew that he was a very poor creature. He longed to rise to something better. He was a mere ignorant, untaught mechanic. He had not been to school with Aristotle and Plato. He could not help himself, or lose himself in the speculations of poets and philosophers. He had only the Bible, and, studying the Bible, he found that the wonder-working power in man's nature was Faith. Faith! What was it? What did it mean? Had he faith? He was but "a poor sot," and yet he thought that he could not be wholly without it. The Bible told him that if he had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, he could work miracles. He did not understand Oriental metaphors; here was a simple test which could be at once applied.

"One day," he writes, "as I was between Elstow and Bedford, the temptation was hot upon me to try if I had faith by doing some miracle. I must say to the puddles that were in the horse-pads, 'be dry,' and truly at one time I was agoing to say so indeed. But just as I was about to speak, the thought came into my mind: Go under yonder hedge first and pray that God would make you able. But when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, that if I prayed and came again and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then be sure I had no faith, but was a castaway, and lost. Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try it yet, but will stay a little longer. Thus was I tossed between the devil and my

own ignorance, and so perplexed at some times that I could not tell what to do."

Common-sense will call this disease, and will think impatiently that the young tinker would have done better to attend to his business. But it must be observed that Bunyan was attending to his business, toiling all the while with grimed hands over his pots and kettles. No one ever complained that the pots and kettles were ill-mended. It was merely that, being simple-minded, he found in his Bible that, besides earning his bread, he had to save or lose his soul. Having no other guide, he took its words literally, and the directions puzzled him.

He grew more and more unhappy, more lowly in his own eyes—

"Wishing him like to those more rich in hope"—

like the women who were so far beyond him on the heavenly road. He was a poet without knowing it, and his gifts only served to perplex him further. His speculations assumed bodily forms which he supposed to be actual visions. He saw his poor friends sitting on the sunny side of a high mountain refreshing themselves in the warmth, while he was shivering in frost, and snow, and mist. The mountain was surrounded by a wall, through which he tried to pass, and searched long in vain for an opening through it. At last he found one, very straight and narrow, through which he struggled, after desperate efforts. "It showed him," he said, "that none could enter into life but those who were in downright earnest, and unless they left the wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for body and soul and sin." The vision brought him no comfort, for it passed away, and left him still on the wrong side: a little com-

portable self-conceit would have set him at rest. But, like all real men, Bunyan had the worst opinion of himself. He looked at his Bible again. He found that he must be elected. Was he elected? He could as little tell as whether he had faith. He knew that he longed to be elected, but "the Scripture trampled on his desire;" for it said, "It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;" therefore, unless God had chosen him, his labour was in vain. The devil saw his opportunity; the devil, among his other attributes, must have possessed that of omnipresence; for whenever any human soul was in straits, he was personally at hand to take advantage of it.

"It may be that you are not elected," the tempter said to Bunyan. "It may be so indeed," thought he. "Why, then," said Satan, "you had as good leave off and strive no farther; for if, indeed, you should not be elected and chosen of God, there is no talk of your being saved."

A comforting text suggested itself. "Look at the generations of old; did any ever trust in the Lord and was confounded?" But these exact words, unfortunately, were only to be found in the Apocrypha. And there was a further distressing possibility, which has occurred to others besides Bunyan. Perhaps the day of grace was passed. It came on him one day as he walked in the country that perhaps those good people in Bedford were all that the Lord would save in those parts, and that he came too late for the blessing. True, Christ had said, "Compel them to come in, for yet there is room." It might be "that when Christ spoke those words," He was thinking of him—him among the rest that he had chosen, and had meant to encourage him. But Bunyan was too simply modest to gather comfort from such aspiring thoughts. He de-

sired to be converted, craved for it, longed for it with all his heart and soul. "Could it have been gotten for gold," he said, "what would I not have given for it! Had I had a whole world it had all gone ten thousand times over for this, that my soul might have been in a converted state. But, oh! I was made sick by that saying of Christ: 'He called to Him whom He would, and they came to Him.' I feared He would not call me."

Election, conversion, day of grace, coming to Christ, have been pawed and fingered by unctuous hands for now two hundred years. The bloom is gone from the flower. The plumage, once shining with hues direct from heaven, is soiled and bedraggled. The most solemn of all realities have been degraded into the passwords of technical theology. In Bunyan's day, in camp and council chamber, in High Courts of Parliament, and among the poor drudges in English villages, they were still radiant with spiritual meaning. The dialect may alter; but if man is more than a brief floating bubble on the eternal river of time; if there be really an immortal part of him which need not perish; and if his business on earth is to save it from perishing—he will still try to pierce the mountain barrier; he will still find the work as hard as Bunyan found it. We live in days of progress and enlightenment; nature on a hundred sides has unlocked her storehouses of knowledge. But she has furnished no "open sesame" to bid the mountain gate fly wide which leads to conquest of self. There is still no passage there for "body and soul and sin."

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CHAPTER III.

"GRACE ABOUNDING."

THE women in Bedford, to whom Bunyan had opened his mind, had been naturally interested in him. Young and rough as he was, he could not have failed to impress anyone who conversed with him with a sense that he was a remarkable person. They mentioned him to Mr. Gifford, the minister of the Baptist Church at Bedford. John Gifford had, at the beginning of the Civil War, been a loose young officer in the king's army. He had been taken prisoner when engaged in some exploit which was contrary to the usages of war. A court-martial had sentenced him to death, and he was to have been shot in a few hours, when he broke out of his prison with his sister's help, and, after various adventures, settled at Bedford as a doctor. The near escape had not sobered him. He led a disorderly life, drinking and gambling, till the loss of a large sum of money startled him into seriousness. In the language of the time, he became convinced of sin, and joined the Baptists, the most thorough-going and consistent of all the Protestant sects. If the Sacrament of Baptism is not a magical form, but is a personal act, in which the baptised person devotes himself to Christ's service, to baptise children at an age when they cannot understand what they are doing may well seem irrational and even impious.

Gifford, who was now the head of the Baptist community in the town, invited Bunyan to his house, and explained the causes of his distress to him. He was a lost sinner. It was true that he had parted with his old faults, and was leading a new life. But his heart was unchanged; his past offences stood in record against him. He was still under the wrath of God, miserable in his position, and therefore miserable in mind. He must become sensible of his lost state, and lay hold of the only remedy, or there was no hope for him.

There was no difficulty in convincing Bunyan that he was in a bad way. He was too well aware of it already. In a work of fiction, the conviction would be followed immediately by consoling grace. In the actual experience of a living human soul, the medicine operates less pleasantly.

"I began," he says, "to see something of the vanity and inward wretchedness of my wicked heart, for as yet I knew no great matter therein. But now it began to be discovered unto me, and to work for wickedness as it never did before. Lusts and corruptions would strongly put themselves forth within me in wicked thoughts and desires which I did not regard before. Whereas, before, my soul was full of longing after God; now my heart began to hanker after every foolish vanity."

Constitutions differ. Mr. Gifford's treatment, if it was ever good for any man, was too sharp for Bunyan. The fierce acid which had been poured into his wounds set them all festering again. He frankly admits that he was now farther from conversion than before. His heart, do what he would, refused to leave off desiring forbidden pleasures, and while this continued, he supposed that he was still under the law and must perish by it. He compared him-

self to the child who, as he was being brought to Christ, was thrown down by the devil and wallowed foaming. A less healthy nature might have been destroyed by these artificially created and exaggerated miseries. He supposed he was given over to unbelief and wickedness, and yet he relates, with touching simplicity:—

"As to the act of sinning I was never more tender than now. I durst not take up a pin or a stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore, and would smart at every touch. I could not tell how to speak my words for fear I should misplace them."

But the care with which he watched his conduct availed him nothing. He was on a morass "that shook if he did but stir," and he was "there left both of God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and of all good things." Behind him lay the faults of his childhood and youth, every one of which he believed to be recorded against him. Within were his disobedient inclinations, which he conceived to be the presence of the devil in his heart. If he was to be presented clean of stain before God he must have a perfect righteousness, which was to be found only in Christ, and Christ had rejected him. "My original and inward pollution," he writes, "was my plague and my affliction. I was more loathsome in my own eyes than was a toad, and I thought I was so in God's eyes too. I thought every one had a better heart than I had. I could have changed heart with anybody. I thought none but the devil himself could equal me for inward wickedness and pollution. Sure, thought I, I am given up to the devil and to a reprobate mind; and thus I continued for a long while, even for some years together."

And all the while the world went on so quietly; these things over which Bunyan was so miserable not seeming

to trouble anyone except himself; and as if they had no existence except on Sundays and in pious talk. Old people were hunting after the treasures of this life, as if they were never to leave the earth. Professors of religion complained when they lost fortune or health; what were fortune and health to the awful possibilities which lay beyond the grave? To Bunyan the future life of Christianity was a reality as certain as the next day's sunrise; and he could have been happy on bread and water if he could have felt himself prepared to enter it. Every created being seemed better off than he was. He was sorry that God had made him a man. He "blessed the condition of the birds, beasts, and fishes, for they had not a sinful nature. They were not obnoxious to the wrath of God; they were not to go to hell-fire after death." He recalled the texts which spoke of Christ and forgiveness. He tried to persuade himself that Christ cared for him. He could have talked of Christ's love and mercy "even to the very crows which sat on the ploughed land before him." But he was too sincere to satisfy himself with formulas and phrases. He could not, he would not, profess to be convinced that things would go well with him when he was not convinced. Cold spasms of doubt laid hold of him—doubts, not so much of his own salvation, as of the truth of all that he had been taught to believe; and the problem had to be fought and grappled with, which lies in the intellectual nature of every genuine man, whether he be an *Æschylus* or a *Shakspeare*, or a poor working Bedfordshire mechanic. No honest soul can look out upon the world and see it as it really is, without the question rising in him whether there be any God that governs it at all. No one can accept the popular notion of heaven and hell as actually true, without being as ter-

rified as Bunyan was. We go on as we do, and attend to our business and enjoy ourselves, because the words have no real meaning to us. Providence in its kindness leaves most of us unblest or uncurs'd with natures of too fine a fibre.

Bunyan was hardly dealt with. "Whole floods of blasphemies," he says, "against God, Christ, and the Scriptures were poured upon my spirit; questions against the very being of God and of his only beloved Son, as whether there was in truth a God or Christ, or no, and whether the Holy Scriptures were not rather a fable and cunning story than the holy and pure Word of God."

"How can you tell," the tempter whispered, "but that the Turks have as good a Scripture to prove their Mahomet the Saviour, as we have to prove our Jesus is? Could I think that so many tens of thousands, in so many countries and kingdoms, should be without the knowledge of the right way to heaven, if there were indeed a heaven, and that we who lie in a corner of the earth should alone be blessed therewith? Every one doth think his own religion the rightest—both Jews, Moors, and Pagans; and how if all our faith, and Christ, and Scripture should be but 'a think so' too?" St. Paul spoke positively. Bunyan saw shrewdly that on St. Paul the weight of the whole Christian theory really rested. But "how could he tell but that St. Paul, being a subtle and cunning man, might give himself up to deceive with strong delusions?" "He was carried away by such thoughts as by a whirlwind."

His belief in the active agency of the devil in human affairs, of which he supposed that he had witnessed instances, was no doubt a great help to him. If he could have imagined that his doubts or misgivings had been suggested by a desire for truth, they would have been harder

to bear. More than ever he was convinced that he was possessed by the devil. He "compared himself to a child carried off by a gipsy." "Kick sometimes I did," he says, "and scream, and cry, but yet I was as bound in the wings of temptation, and the wind would bear me away." "I blessed the dog and toad, and counted the condition of everything that God had made far better than this dreadful state of mine. The dog or horse had no soul to perish under the everlasting weight of hell for sin, as mine was like to do."

Doubts about revelation and the truth of Scripture were more easy to encounter then than they are at present. Bunyan was protected by want of learning, and by a powerful predisposition to find the objections against the credibility of the Gospel history to be groundless. Critical investigation had not as yet analysed the historical construction of the sacred books; and scepticism, as he saw it in people round him, did actually come from the devil; that is, from a desire to escape the moral restraints of religion. The wisest, noblest, best instructed men in England at that time regarded the Bible as an authentic communication from God, and as the only foundation for law and civil society. The masculine sense and strong, modest intellect of Bunyan ensured his acquiescence in an opinion so powerfully supported. Fits of uncertainty recurred even to the end of his life; it must be so with men who are honestly in earnest; but his doubts were of course only intermittent, and his judgment was in the main satisfied that the Bible was, as he had been taught, the Word of God. This, however, helped him little; for in the Bible he read his own condemnation. The weight which pressed him down was the sense of his unworthiness. What was he that God should care for him? He fancied

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that he heard God saying to the angels, "This poor, simple wretch doth hanker after me, as if I had nothing to do with my mercy but to bestow it on such as he. Poor fool, how art thou deceived! It is not for such as thee to have favour with the Highest."

Miserable as he was, he clung to his misery as the one link which connected him with the object of his longings. If he had no hope of heaven, he was at least distracted that he must lose it. He was afraid of dying, yet he was still more afraid of continuing to live; lest the impression should wear away through time, and occupation and other interests should turn his heart away to the world, and thus his wounds might cease to pain him.

Readers of the "Pilgrim's Progress" sometimes ask with wonder, why, after Christian had been received into the narrow gate, and had been set forward upon his way, so many trials and dangers still lay before him. The answer is simply that Christian was a pilgrim, that the journey of life still lay before him, and at every step temptations would meet him in new, unexpected shapes. St. Anthony in his hermitage was beset by as many fiends as had ever troubled him when in the world. Man's spiritual existence is like the flight of a bird in the air; he is sustained only by effort, and when he ceases to exert himself he falls. There are intervals, however, of comparative calm, and to one of these the storm-tossed Bunyan was now approaching. He had passed through the Slough of Despond. He had gone astray after Mr. Legality, and the rocks had almost overwhelmed him. Evangelist now found him and put him right again, and he was to be allowed a breathing space at the Interpreter's house. As he was at his ordinary daily work, his mind was restlessly busy. Verses of Scripture came into his head, sweet while pres-

ent, but, like Peter's sheet, caught up again into heaven. We may have heard all our lives of Christ. Words and ideas with which we have been familiar from childhood are trodden into paths as barren as sand. Suddenly, we know not how, the meaning flashes upon us. The seed has found its way into some corner of our minds where it can germinate. The shell breaks, the cotyledons open, and the plant of faith is alive. So it was now to be with Bunyan.

"One day," he says, "as I was travelling into the country, musing on the wickedness of my heart, and considering the enmity that was in me to God, the Scripture came into my mind, 'He hath made peace through the blood of His cross.' I saw that the justice of God and my sinful soul could embrace and kiss each other. I was ready to swoon, not with grief and trouble, but with solid joy and peace." Everything became clear: the Gospel history, the birth, the life, the death of the Saviour; how gently he gave himself to be nailed on the cross for his (Bunyan's) sins. "I saw Him in the spirit," he goes on, "a Man on the right hand of the Father, pleading for me, and have seen the manner of His coming from heaven to judge the world with glory."

The sense of guilt which had so oppressed him was now a key to the mystery. "God," he says, "suffered me to be afflicted with temptations concerning these things, and then revealed them to me." He was crushed to the ground by the thought of his wickedness; "the Lord showed him the death of Christ, and lifted the weight away."

Now he thought he had a personal evidence from heaven that he was really saved. Before this, he had lain trembling at the mouth of hell; now he was so far away from it that he could scarce tell where it was. He fell in

at this time with a copy of Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, "so old that it was like to fall to pieces." Bunyan found in it the exact counterpart of his own experience: "of all the books that he had ever met with, it seemed to him the most fit for a wounded conscience."

Everything was supernatural with him: when a bad thought came into his mind, it was the devil that put it there. These breathings of peace he regarded as the immediate voice of his Saviour. Alas! the respite was but short. He had hoped that his troubles were over, when the tempter came back upon him in the most extraordinary form which he had yet assumed. Bunyan had himself left the door open; the evil spirits could only enter "Mansoul" through the owner's negligence, but once in, they could work their own wicked will. How it happened will be told afterwards. The temptation itself must be described first. Never was a nature more perversely ingenious in torturing itself.

He had gained Christ, as he called it. He was now tempted "to sell and part with this most blessed Christ, to exchange Him for the things of this life—for anything." If there had been any real prospect of worldly advantage before Bunyan, which he could have gained by abandoning his religious profession, the words would have had a meaning; but there is no hint or trace of any prospect of the kind; nor in Bunyan's position could there have been. The temptation, as he called it, was a freak of fancy: fancy resenting the minuteness with which he watched his own emotions. And yet he says, "It lay upon me for a year, and did follow me so continually that I was not rid of it one day in a month, sometimes not an hour in many days together, unless when I was asleep. I could neither

eat my food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, or cast my eye to look on this or that, but still the temptation would come, 'Sell Christ for this, sell Him for that! Sell Him! Sell Him!'

He had been haunted before with a notion that he was under a spell; that he had been fated to commit the unpardonable sin; and he was now thinking of Judas, who had been admitted to Christ's intimacy, and had then betrayed him. Here it was before him—the very thing which he had so long dreaded. If his heart did but consent for a moment, the deed was done. His doom had overtaken him. He wrestled with the thought as it rose, thrust it from him "with his hands and elbows," body and mind convulsed together in a common agony. As fast as the destroyer said, "Sell Him," Bunyan said, "I will not; I will not; I will not; not for thousands, thousands, thousands of worlds!" One morning, as he lay in his bed, the voice came again, and would not be driven away. Bunyan fought against it till he was out of breath. He fell back exhausted, and, without conscious action of his will, the fatal sentence passed through his brain, "Let Him go if He will."

That the "selling Christ" was a bargain in which he was to lose all and receive nothing is evident from the form in which he was overcome. Yet, if he had gained a fortune by fraud or forgery, he could not have been more certain that he had destroyed himself.

Satan had won the battle, and he, "as a bird shot from a tree, had fallen into guilt and despair." He got out of bed, "and went moping into the fields," where he wandered for two hours, "as a man bereft of life, and now past recovering," "bound over to eternal punishment." He shrank under the hedges, "in guilt and sorrow, bemoan-

ing the hardness of his fate." In vain the words now came back that had so comforted him, "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." They had no application to him. He had acquired his birthright, but, like Esau, he had sold it, and could not any more find place for repentance. True, it was said that "all manner of sins and blasphemies should be forgiven unto men," but only such sins and blasphemies as had been committed in the natural state. Bunyan had received grace, and, after receiving it, had sinned against the Holy Ghost.

It was done, and nothing could undo it. David had received grace, and had committed murder and adultery after it. But murder and adultery, bad as they might be, were only transgressions of the law of Moses. Bunyan had sinned against the Mediator himself; "he had sold his Saviour." One sin, and only one, there was which could not be pardoned, and he had been guilty of it. Peter had sinned against grace, and even after he had been warned. Peter, however, had but denied his Master. Bunyan had sold him. He was no David or Peter, he was Judas. It was very hard. Others naturally as bad as he had been saved. Why had he been picked out to be made a Son of Perdition? A Judas! Was there any point in which he was better than Judas? Judas had sinned with deliberate purpose: he "in a fearful hurry," and "against prayer and striving." But there might be more ways than one of committing the unpardonable sin, and there might be degrees of it. It was a dreadful condition. The old doubts came back.

"I was now ashamed," he says, "that I should be like such an ugly man as Judas. I thought how loathsome I should be to all the saints at the Day of Judgment. I was tempted to content myself by receiving some false

opinion, as that there should be no such thing as the Day of Judgment, that we should not rise again, that sin was no such grievous thing, the tempter suggesting that if these things should be indeed true, yet to believe otherwise would yield me ease for the present. If I must perish, I need not torment myself beforehand."

Judas! Judas! was now for ever before his eyes. So identified he was with Judas that he felt at times as if his breastbone was bursting. A mark like Cain's was on him. In vain he searched again through the catalogue of pardoned sinners. Manasseh had consulted wizards and familiar spirits. Manasseh had burnt his children in the fire to devils. He had found mercy; but, alas! Manasseh's sins had nothing of the nature of selling the Saviour. To have sold the Saviour "was a sin bigger than the sins of a country, of a kingdom, or of the whole world—not all of them together could equal it."

His brain was overstrained, it will be said. Very likely. It is to be remembered, however, who and what he was, and that he had overstrained it in his eagerness to learn what he conceived his Maker to wish him to be—a form of anxiety not common in this world. The cure was as remarkable as the disorder. One day he was "in a good man's shop," still "afflicting himself with self-abhorrence," when something seemed to rush in through an open window, and he heard a voice saying, "Didst ever refuse to be justified by the blood of Christ?" Bunyan shared the belief of his time. He took the system of things as the Bible represented it; but his strong common sense put him on his guard against being easily credulous. He thought at the time that the voice was supernatural. After twenty years he said, modestly, that he "could not make a judgment of it." The effect, any way, was as if an an-

gel had come to him and had told him that there was still hope. Hapless as his condition was, he might still pray for mercy, and might possibly find it. He tried to pray, and found it very hard. The devil whispered again that God was tired of him; God wanted to be rid of him and his importunities, and had, therefore, allowed him to commit this particular sin that he might hear no more of him. He remembered Esau, and thought that this might be too true: "the saying about Esau was a flaming sword barring the way of the tree of life to him." Still he would not give in. "I can but die," he said to himself; "and if it must be so, it shall be said that such an one died at the feet of Christ in prayer."

He was torturing himself with illusions. Most of the saints in the Catholic Calendar have done the same. The most remorseless philosopher can hardly refuse a certain admiration for this poor uneducated village lad struggling so bravely in the theological spider's web. The "Professors" could not comfort him, having never experienced similar distresses in their own persons. He consulted "an Antient Christian," telling him that he feared that he had sinned against the Holy Ghost. The Antient Christian answered gravely that he thought so too. The devil having him at advantage, began to be witty with him. The devil suggested that, as he had offended the second or third Person of the Trinity, he had better pray the Father to mediate for him with Christ and the Holy Spirit. Then the devil took another turn. Christ, he said, was really sorry for Bunyan, but his case was beyond remedy. Bunyan's sin was so peculiar, that it was not of the nature of those for which He had bled and died, and had not, therefore, been laid to His charge. To justify Bunyan he must come down and die again, and that was not to be thought

of. "Oh!" exclaimed the unfortunate victim, "the unthought-of imaginations, frights, fears, and terrors that are effected by a thorough application of guilt (to a spirit) that is yielded to desperation. This is the man that hath his dwelling among the tombs."

Sitting in this humour on a settle in the street at Bedford, he was pondering over his fearful state. The sun in heaven seemed to grudge its light to him. "The stones in the street and the tiles on the houses did bend themselves against him." Each crisis in Bunyan's mind is always framed in the picture of some spot where it occurred. He was crying, "in the bitterness of his soul, How can God comfort such a wretch as I am?" As before, in the shop, a voice came in answer, "This sin is not unto death." The first voice had brought him hope, which was almost extinguished; the second was a message of life. The night was gone, and it was daylight. He had come to the end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and the spectres and the hobgoblins which had jibbered at him suddenly all vanished. A moment before he had supposed that he was out of reach of pardon—that he had no right to pray, no right to repent, or, at least, that neither prayer nor repentance could profit him. If his sin was not to death, then he was on the same ground as other sinners. If they might pray, he might pray, and might look to be forgiven on the same terms. He still saw that his "selling Christ" had been "most barbarous," but despair was followed by an extravagance, no less unbounded, of gratitude, when he felt that Christ would pardon even this.

"Love and affection for Christ," he says, "did work at this time such a strong and hot desire of revengement upon myself for the abuse I had done to Him, that, to speak as then I thought, had I had a thousand gallons of

blood in my veins, I could freely have spilt it all at the command of my Lord and Saviour. The tempter told me it was vain to pray. Yet, thought I, I will pray. But, said the tempter, your sin is unpardonable. Well, said I, I will pray. It is no boot, said he. Yet, said I, I will pray; so I went to prayer, and I uttered words to this effect: Lord, Satan tells me that neither Thy mercy nor Christ's blood is sufficient to save my soul. Lord, shall I honour Thee most by believing that Thou wilt and canst, or him, by believing that Thou neither wilt nor canst? Lord, I would fain honour Thee by believing that Thou wilt and canst. As I was there before the Lord, the Scripture came, Oh! man, great is thy faith, even as if one had clapped me on the back."

The waves had not wholly subsided; but we need not follow the undulations any farther. It is enough that after a "conviction of sin," considerably deeper than most people find necessary for themselves, Bunyan had come to realize what was meant by salvation in Christ, according to the received creed of the contemporary Protestant world. The intensity of his emotions arose only from the completeness with which he believed it. Man had sinned, and by sin was made a servant of the devil. His redemption was a personal act of the Saviour towards each individual sinner. In the Atonement Christ had before him each separate person whom he designed to save, blotting out his offences, however heinous they might be, and recording in place of them his own perfect obedience. Each reconciled sinner in return regarded Christ's sufferings as undergone immediately for himself, and gratitude for that great deliverance enabled and obliged him to devote his strength and soul thenceforward to God's service. In the seventeenth century, all earnest English Protestants held

this belief. In the nineteenth century, most of us repeat the phrases of this belief, and pretend to hold it. We think we hold it. We are growing more cautious, perhaps, with our definitions. We suspect that there may be mysteries in God's nature and methods which we cannot fully explain. The outlines of "the scheme of salvation" are growing indistinct; and we see it through a gathering mist. Yet the essence of it will remain true, whether we recognise it or not. While man remains man he will do things which he ought not to do. He will leave undone things which he ought to do. To will, may be present with him; but how to perform what he wills, he will never fully know, and he will still hate "the body of death" which he feels clinging to him. He will try to do better. When he falls, he will struggle to his feet again. He will climb and climb on the hill-side, though he never reaches the top, and knows that he can never reach it. His life will be a failure, which he will not dare to offer as a fit account of himself, or as worth a serious regard. Yet he will still hope that he will not be wholly cast away when, after his sleep in death, he wakes again.

Now, says Bunyan, there remained only the hinder part of the tempest. Heavenly voices continued to encourage him. "As I was passing in the field," he goes on, "I heard the sentence, thy righteousness is in heaven; and methought I saw, with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand, there I say, as my righteousness, so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me He wants my righteousness, for that was just before Him. Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed. I was loosed from my affliction and irons; my temptations also fled away, so that from that time those dreadful Scriptures of God left off to trouble me. Now

went I home rejoicing for the grace and love of God. Christ of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. I now lived very sweetly at peace with God through Christ. Oh! my thought, Christ! Christ! There was nothing but Christ before my eyes. I was not now only looking upon this and the other benefits of Christ apart, as of His blood, burial, and resurrection, but considered Him as a whole Christ. All those graces that were now green in me were yet but like those cracked groats and fourpence half-pennies which rich men carry in their purses, while their gold is in their trunks at home. Oh! I saw my gold was in my trunk at home in Christ my Lord and Saviour. The Lord led me into the mystery of union with the Son of God, that I was joined to Him, that I was flesh of His flesh. If He and I were one, His righteousness was mine, His merits mine, His victory mine. Now I could see myself in heaven and earth at once; in heaven by my Christ, though on earth by my body and person. Christ was that common and public person in whom the whole body of His elect are always to be considered and reckoned. We fulfilled the law by Him, died by Him, rose from the dead by Him, got the victory over sin and death, the devil and hell by Him. I had cause to say, Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary."

CHAPTER IV.

CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

THE Pilgrim falls into the hands of Giant Despair because he has himself first strayed into Byepath Meadow. Bunyan found an explanation of his last convulsion in an act of unbelief, on which, on looking back, he perceived that he had been guilty. He had been delivered out of his first temptation. He had not been sufficiently on his guard against temptations that might come in the future; nay, he had himself tempted God. His wife had been overtaken by a premature confinement, and was suffering acutely. It was at the time when Bunyan was exercised with questions about the truth of religion altogether. As the poor woman lay crying at his side, he had said, mentally, "Lord, if Thou wilt now remove this sad affliction from my wife, and cause that she be troubled no more therewith this night, then I shall know that Thou canst discern the more secret thoughts of the heart." In a moment the pain ceased, and she fell into a sleep which lasted till morning. Bunyan, though surprised at the time, forgot what had happened, till it rushed back upon his memory, when he had committed himself by a similar mental assent to selling Christ. He remembered the proof which had been given to him that God could and did discern his thoughts. God had discerned this second thought also, and in punishing him for it had punished him at the same time for

the doubt which he had allowed himself to feel. "I should have believed His word," he said, "and not have put an 'if' upon the all-seeingness of God."

The suffering was over now, and he felt that it had been infinitely beneficial to him. He understood better the glory of God and of his Son. The Scriptures had opened their secrets to him, and he had seen them to be in very truth the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. Never so clearly as after this "temptation" had he perceived "the heights of grace, and love, and mercy." Two or three times "he had such strange apprehensions of the grace of God as had amazed him." The impression was so overpowering that if it had continued long "it would have rendered him incapable for business." He joined his friend Mr. Gifford's church. He was baptised in the Ouse, and became a professed member of the Baptist congregation. Soon after, his mental conflict was entirely over, and he had two quiet years of peace. Before a man can use his powers to any purpose, he must arrive at some conviction in which his intellect can acquiesce. "Calm yourself," says Jean Paul; "it is your first necessity. Be a stoic, if nothing else will serve." Bunyan had not been driven into stoicism. He was now restored to the possession of his faculties, and his remarkable ability was not long in showing itself.

The first consequence of his mental troubles was an illness. He had a cough which threatened to turn into consumption. He thought it was all over with him, and he was fixing his eyes "on the heavenly Jerusalem and the innumerable company of angels;" but the danger passed off, and he became well and strong in mind and body. Notwithstanding his various miseries, he had not neglected his business, and had, indeed, been specially successful.

By the time that he was twenty-five years old he was in a position considerably superior to that in which he was born. "God," says a contemporary biographer, "had increased his stores so that he lived in great credit among his neighbours." On May 13, 1653, Bedfordshire sent an address to Cromwell approving the dismissal of the Long Parliament, recognising Oliver himself as the Lord's instrument, and recommending the county magistrates as fit persons to serve in the Assembly which was to take its place. Among thirty-six names attached to this document appear those of Gifford and Bunyan. This speaks for itself: he must have been at least a householder and a person of consideration. It was not, however, as a prosperous brazier that Bunyan was to make his way. He had a gift of speech, which, in the democratic congregation to which he belonged, could not long remain hid. Young as he was, he had sounded the depths of spiritual experience. Like Dante, he had been in hell—the popular hell of English Puritanism—and in 1655, he was called upon to take part in the "ministry." He was modest, humble, shrinking. The minister when he preached was, according to the theory, an instrument uttering the words not of himself but of the Holy Spirit. A man like Bunyan, who really believed this, might well be alarmed. After earnest entreaty, however, "he made experiment of his powers" in private, and it was at once evident that, with the thing which these people meant by inspiration, he was abundantly supplied. No such preacher to the uneducated English masses was to be found within the four seas. He says that he had no desire of vainglory; no one who has studied his character can suppose that he had. He was a man of natural genius, who believed the Protestant form of Christianity to be completely true. He knew nothing

of philosophy, nothing of history, nothing of literature. The doubts to which he acknowledged being without their natural food, had never presented themselves in a form which would have compelled him to submit to remain uncertain. Doubt, as he had felt it, was a direct enemy of morality and purity, and as such he had fought with it and conquered it. Protestant Christianity was true. All mankind were perishing unless they saw it to be true. This was his message; a message—supposing him to have been right—of an importance so immeasurable that all else was nothing. He was still “afflicted with the fiery darts of the devil,” but he saw that he must not bury his abilities. “In fear and trembling,” therefore, he set himself to the work, and “did according to his power preach the Gospel that God had shewn him.”

“The Lord led him to begin where his Word began—with sinners. This part of my work,” he says, “I fulfilled with a great sense, for the terrors of the law and guilt for my transgressions lay heavy on my conscience. I preached what I felt. I had been sent to my hearers as from the dead. I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains, and carried that fire in my own conscience that I persuaded them to beware of. I have gone full of guilt and terror to the pulpit door; God carried me on with a strong hand, for neither guilt nor hell could take me off.”

Many of Bunyan’s addresses remain in the form of theological treatises, and, that I may not have to return to the subject, I shall give some account of them. His doctrine was the doctrine of the best and strongest minds in Europe. It had been believed by Luther, it had been believed by Knox. It was believed at that moment by Oliver Cromwell as completely as by Bunyan himself. It was believed, so far as such a person could be said to believe

anything, by the all-accomplished Leibnitz himself. Few educated people use the language of it now. In them it was a fire from heaven shining like a sun in a dark world. With us the fire has gone out; in the place of it we have but smoke and ashes; and the Evangelical mind, in search of "something deeper and truer than satisfied the last century," is turning back to Catholic verities. What Bunyan had to say may be less than the whole truth: we shall scarcely find the still missing part of it in lines of thought which we have outgrown.

Bunyan preached wherever opportunity served—in woods, in barns, on village greens, or in town chapels. The substance of his sermons he revised and published. He began, as he said, with sinners, explaining the condition of men in the world. They were under the law, or they were under grace. Every person that came into the world was born under the law, and as such was bound, under pain of eternal damnation, to fulfil completely and continually every one of the Ten Commandments. The Bible said plainly, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The Ten Commandments extended into many more, and to fail in a single one was as fatal as to break them all. A man might go on for a long time, for sixty years perhaps, without falling. Bunyan does not mean that anyone really could do all this, but he assumes the possibility; yet he says if the man slipped once before he died, he would eternally perish. The law does not refer to words and actions only, but to thoughts and feelings. It followed a man in his prayers, and detected a wandering thought. It allowed no repentance to those who lived and died under it. If it was asked whether God could

not pardon, as earthly judges pardon criminals, the answer was that it is not the law which is merciful to the earthly offender, but the magistrate. The law is an eternal principle. The magistrate may forgive a man without exacting satisfaction. The law knows no forgiveness. It can be as little changed as an axiom of mathematics. Repentance cannot undo the past. Let a man leave his sins and live as purely as an angel all the rest of his life, his old faults remain in the account against him, and his state is as bad as ever it was. God's justice once offended knows not pity or compassion, but runs on the offender like a lion and throws him into prison, there to lie to all eternity unless infinite satisfaction be given to it. And that satisfaction no son of Adam could possibly make.

This conception of Divine justice, not as a sentence of a judge, but as the action of an eternal law, is identical with Spinoza's. That every act involves consequences which cannot be separated from it, and may continue operative to eternity, is a philosophical position which is now generally admitted. Combined with the traditionary notions of a future judgment and punishment in hell, the recognition that there was a law in the case, and that the law could not be broken, led to the frightful inference that each individual was liable to be kept alive and tortured through all eternity. And this, in fact, was the fate really in store for every human creature unless some extraordinary remedy could be found. Bunyan would allow no merit to anyone. He would not have it supposed that only the profane or grossly wicked were in danger from the law. "A man," he says, "may be turned from a vain, loose, open, profane conversation and sinning against the law, to a holy, righteous, religious life, and yet be under the same state and as sure to be damned as the others

that are more profane and loose." The natural man might think it strange, but the language of the curse was not to be mistaken. Cursed is every one who has failed to fulfil the whole law. There was not a person in the whole world who had not himself sinned in early life. All had sinned in Adam also, and St. Paul had said in consequence, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one!" The law was given not that we might be saved by obeying it, but that we might know the holiness of God and our own vileness, and that we might understand that we should not be damned for nothing. God would have no quarrelling at His just condemning of us at that day."

This is Bunyan's notion of the position in which we all naturally stand in this world, and from which the substitution of Christ's perfect fulfilment of the law alone rescues us. It is calculated, no doubt, to impress on us a profound horror of moral evil when the penalty attached to it is so fearful. But it is dangerous to introduce into religion metaphysical conceptions of "law." The cord cracks that is strained too tightly; and it is only for brief periods of high spiritual tension that a theology so merciless can sustain itself. No one with a conscience in him will think of claiming any merit for himself. But we know also that there are degrees of demerit, and, theory or no theory, we fall back on the first verse of the English Liturgy, as containing a more endurable account of things.

For this reason, among others, Bunyan disliked the Liturgy. He thought the doctrine of it false, and he objected to a Liturgy on principle. He has a sermon on Prayer, in which he insists that to be worth anything prayer must be the expression of an inward feeling; and that people cannot feel in lines laid down for them.

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Forms of prayer he thought especially mischievous to children, as accustoming them to use words to which they attached no meaning.

"My judgment," he says, "is that men go the wrong way to learn their children to pray. It seems to me a better way for people to tell their children betimes what cursed creatures they are, how they are under the wrath of God by reason of original and actual sin; also to tell them the nature of God's wrath and the duration of misery, which, if they would conscientiously do, they would sooner learn their children to pray than they do. The way that men learn to pray is by conviction of sin, and this is the way to make our 'sweet babes' do so too."

"Sweet babes" is unworthy of Bunyan. There is little sweetness in a state of things so stern as he conceives. He might have considered, too, that there was a danger of making children unreal in another and worse sense by teaching them doctrines which neither child nor man can comprehend. It may be true that a single sin may consign me to everlasting hell, but I cannot be made to acknowledge the justice of it. "Wrath of God" and such expressions are out of place when we are brought into the presence of metaphysical laws. Wrath corresponds to free-will misused. It is senseless and extravagant when pronounced against actions which men cannot help, when the faulty action is the necessary consequence of their nature, and the penalty the necessary consequence of the action.

The same confusion of thought lies in the treatment of the kindred subjects of Free-will, Election, and Reprobation. The logic must be maintained, and God's moral attributes simultaneously vindicated. Bunyan argues about

it as ingeniously as Leibnitz himself. Those who suppose that specific guilt attaches to particular acts, that all men are put into the world free to keep the Commandments or to break them, that they are equally able to do one as to do the other, and are, therefore, proper objects of punishment, hold an opinion which is consistent in itself, but is in entire contradiction with facts. Children are not as able to control their inclinations as grown men, and one man is not as able to control himself as another. Some have no difficulty from the first, and are constitutionally good; some are constitutionally weak, or have incurable propensities for evil. Some are brought up with care and insight; others seem never to have any chance at all. So evident is this, that impartial thinkers have questioned the reality of human guilt in the sense in which it is generally understood. Even Butler allows that if we look too curiously we may have a difficulty in finding where it lies. And here, if anywhere, there is a real natural truth in the doctrine of Election, independent of the merit of those who are so happy as to find favor. Bunyan, however, reverses the inference. He will have all guilty together, those who do well and those who do ill. Even the elect are in themselves as badly off as the reprobate, and are equally included under sin. Those who are saved are saved for Christ's merits and not for their own.

Men of calmer temperament accept facts as they find them. They are too conscious of their ignorance to insist on explaining problems which are beyond their reach. Bunyan lived in an age of intense religious excitement, when the strongest minds were exercising themselves on those questions. It is noticeable that the most effective intellects inclined to necessitarian conclusions: some in the shape of Calvinism, some in the corresponding philosophic

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form of Spinozism. From both alike there came an absolute submission to the decrees of God, and a passionate devotion to his service; while the morality of Free-will is cold and calculating. Appeals to a sense of duty do not reach beyond the understanding. The enthusiasm which will stir men's hearts and give them a real power of resisting temptation must be nourished on more invigorating food.

But I need dwell no more on a subject which is unsuited for these pages.

The object of Bunyan, like that of Luther, like that of all great spiritual teachers, was to bring his wandering fellow-mortals into obedience to the commandments, even while he insisted on the worthlessness of it. He sounded the strings to others which had sounded londest in himself. When he passed from mysticism into matters of ordinary life, he showed the same practical good sense which distinguishes the chief of all this order of thinkers—St. Paul. There is a sermon of Bunyan's on Christian behaviour, on the duties of parents to children, and masters to servants, which might be studied with as much advantage in English households as *The Pilgrim's Progress* itself. To fathers he says, "Take heed that the misdeeds for which thou correctest thy children be not learned them by thee. Many children learn that wickedness of their parents, for which they beat and chastise them. Take heed that thou smile not upon them to encourage them in small faults, lest that thy carriage to them be an encouragement to them to commit greater faults. Take heed that thou use not unsavoury and unseemly words in thy chastising of them, as railing, miscalling, and the like—this is devilish. Take heed that thou do not use them to many chiding words and threatenings, mixed with lightness and laughter. This will harden."

And again : "I tell you that if parents carry it lovingly towards their children, mixing their mercies with loving rebukes, and their loving rebukes with fatherly and motherly compassions, they are more likely to save their children than by being churlish and severe to them. Even if these things do not save them, if their mercy do them no good, yet it will greatly ease them at the day of death to consider, I have done by love as much as I could to save and deliver my child from hell."

Whole volumes on education have said less, or less to the purpose, than these simple words. Unfortunately, parents do not read Bunyan. He is left to children.

Similarly, he says to masters:—

"It is thy duty so to behave thyself to thy servant that thy service may not only be for thy good, but for the good of thy servant, and that in body and soul. Deal with him as to admonition as with thy children. Take heed thou do not turn thy servants into slaves by overcharging them in thy work with thy greediness. Take heed thou carry not thyself to thy servant as he of whom it is said, "He is such a man of Belial that his servants cannot speak to him." The Apostle bids you forbear to threaten them, because you also have a Master in Heaven. Masters, give your servants that which is just, just labour and just wages. Servants that are truly godly care not how cheap they serve their masters, provided they may get into godly families, or where they may be convenient for the Word. But if a master or mistress takes this opportunity to make a prey of their servants, it is abominable. I have heard poor servants say that in some carnal families they have had more liberty to God's things and more fairness of dealing than among many professors. Such masters make religion to stink before the inhabitants of the land."

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Bunyan was generally charitable in his judgment upon others. If there was any exception, it was of professors who discredited their calling by conceit and worldliness.

"No sin," he says, "reigneth more in the world than pride among professors. The thing is too apparent for any man to deny. We may and do see pride display itself in the apparel and carriage of professors almost as much as among any in the land. I have seen church members so decked and bedaubed with their fangles and toys that, when they have been at worship, I have wondered with what faces such painted persons could sit in the place where they were without swooning. I once talked with a maid, by way of reproof for her fond and gaudy garment; she told me the tailor would make it so. Poor proud girl, she gave orders to the tailor to make it so."

I will give one more extract from Bunyan's pastoral addresses. It belongs to a later period in his ministry, when the law had, for a time, remade Dissent into a crime; but it will throw light on the part of his story which we are now approaching, and it is in every way very characteristic of him. He is speaking to sufferers under persecution. He says to them:—

"Take heed of being offended with magistrates, because by their statutes they may cross thy inclinations. It is given to them to bear the sword, and a command is to thee, if thy heart cannot acquiesce with all things, with meekness and patience to suffer. Discontent in the mind sometimes puts discontent into the mouth; and discontent in the mouth doth sometimes also put a halter about thy neck. For as a man speaking a word in jest may for that be hanged in earnest, so he that speaks in discontent may die for it in sober sadness. Above all, get thy conscience possessed more and more with this, that the magistrate is

God's ordinance, and is ordered of God as such; that he is the minister of God to thee for good, and that it is thy duty to fear him and to pray for him; to give thanks to God for him and be subject to him; as both Paul and Peter admonish us; and that not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake. For all other arguments come short of binding the soul when this argument is wanting, until we believe that of God we are bound thereto.

"I speak not these things as knowing any that are disaffected to the government, for I love to be alone, if not with godly men, in things that are convenient. I speak to show my loyalty to the king, and my love to my fellow-subjects, and my desire that all Christians shall walk in ways of peace and truth."

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CHAPTER V.

ARREST AND TRIAL.

BUNYAN'S preaching enterprise became an extraordinary success. All the Midland Counties heard of his fame, and demanded to hear him. He had been Deacon under Gifford at the Bedford Church; but he was in such request as a preacher, that, in 1657, he was released from his duties there as unable to attend to them. Sects were springing up all over England as weeds in a hot-bed. He was soon in controversy; controversy with Church of England people; controversy with the Ranters, who believed Christ to be a myth; controversy with the Quakers, who, at their outset, disbelieved in his Divinity and in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Envy at his rapidly acquired reputation brought him baser enemies. He was called a witch, a Jesuit, a highwayman. It was reported that he had "his misses," that he had two wives, etc. "My foes have missed their mark in this," he said, with honest warmth: "I am not the man. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged by the neck, John Bunyan, the object of their envy, would be still alive and well. I know not whether there be such a thing as a woman breathing under the cope of the whole heavens but by their apparel, their children, or common fame, except my wife."

But a more serious trial was now before him. Crom-

well passed away. The Protectorate came to an end. England decided that it had had enough of Puritans and republicans, and would give the Stuarts and the Established Church another trial. A necessary consequence was the revival of the Act of Uniformity. The Independents were not meek like the Baptists, using no weapons to oppose what they disapproved but passive resistance. The same motives which had determined the original constitution of a Church combining the characters of Protestant and Catholic, instead of leaving religion free, were even more powerful at the Restoration than they had been at the accession of Elizabeth. Before toleration is possible, men must have learnt to tolerate toleration itself; and in times of violent convictions, toleration is looked on as indifference, and indifference as Atheism in disguise. Catholics and Protestants, Churchmen and Dissenters, regarded one another as enemies of God and the State, with whom no peace was possible. Toleration had been tried by the Valois princes in France. Church and chapel had been the rendezvous of armed fanatics. The preachers blew the war-trumpet, and every town and village had been the scene of furious conflicts, which culminated in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. The same result would have followed in England if the same experiment had been ventured. The different communities were forbidden to have their separate places of worship, and services were contrived which moderate men of all sorts could use and interpret after their own convictions. The instrument required to be delicately handled. It succeeded tolerably as long as Elizabeth lived. When Elizabeth died, the balance was no longer fairly kept. The High-Church party obtained the ascendancy, and abused their power. Tyranny brought revolution, and the Catholic element in turn disappeared.

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The Bishops were displaced by Presbyterian elders. The Presbyterian elders became in turn "hireling wolves," "old priest" written in new characters. Cromwell had left conscience free to Protestants. But even he had refused equal liberty to Catholics and Episcopalians. He was gone too, and Church and King were back again. How were they to stand? The stern, resolute men, to whom the Commonwealth had been the establishment of God's kingdom upon earth, were as little inclined to keep terms with Antichrist as the Church people had been inclined to keep terms with Cromwell. To have allowed them to meet openly in their conventicles would have been to make over the whole of England to them as a seed-bed in which to plant sedition. It was pardonable, it was even necessary, for Charles II. and his advisers to fall back upon Elizabeth's principles, at least as long as the ashes were still glowing. Indulgence had to be postponed till cooler times. With the Fifth Monarchy men abroad, every chapel, except those of the Baptists, would have been a magazine of explosives.

Under the 35th of Elizabeth, Nonconformists refusing to attend worship in the parish churches were to be imprisoned till they made their submission. Three months were allowed them to consider. If at the end of that time they were still obstinate, they were to be banished the realm; and if they subsequently returned to England without permission from the Crown, they were liable to execution as felons. This Act had fallen with the Long Parliament, but at the Restoration it was held to have revived and to be still in force. The parish churches were cleared of their unordained ministers. The Dissenters' chapels were closed. The people were required by proclamation to be present on Sundays in their proper place.

So the majority of the nation had decided. If they had wished for religious liberty they would not have restored the Stuarts, or they would have insisted on conditions, and would have seen that they were observed.

Venner's plot showed the reality of the danger and justified the precaution.

The Baptists and Quakers might have been trusted to discourage violence, but it was impossible to distinguish among the various sects, whose tenets were unknown and even unsettled. The great body of Cromwell's spiritual supporters believed that armed resistance to a government which they disapproved was not only lawful, but was enjoined.

Thus, no sooner was Charles II. on the throne than the Nonconformists found themselves again under bondage. Their separate meetings were prohibited, and they were not only forbidden to worship in their own fashion, but they had to attend church, under penalties. The Bedford Baptists refused to obey. Their meeting-house in the town was shut up, but they continued to assemble in woods and outhouses; Bunyan preaching to them as before, and going to the place in disguise. Informers were soon upon his track. The magistrates had received orders to be vigilant. Bunyan was the most prominent Dissenter in the neighbourhood. He was too sensible to court martyrdom. He had intended to leave the town till more quiet times, and had arranged to meet a few of his people once more to give them a parting address. It was November 12, 1660. The place agreed on was a house in the village of Samsell, near Harlington. Notice of his intention was privately conveyed to Mr. Wingate, a magistrate in the adjoining district. The constables were set to watch the house, and were directed to bring Bunyan before him.

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Some member of the congregation heard of it. Bunyan was warned, and was advised to stay at home that night, or else to conceal himself. His departure had been already arranged; but when he learnt that a warrant was actually out against him, he thought that he was bound to stay and face the danger. He was the first Nonconformist who had been marked for arrest. If he flinched after he had been singled out by name, the whole body of his congregation would be discouraged. Go to church he would not, or promise to go to church; but he was willing to suffer whatever punishment the law might order. Thus, at the time and place which had been agreed on, he was in the room at Samsell, with his Bible in his hand, and was about to begin his address, when the constables entered and arrested him. He made no resistance. He desired only to be allowed to say a few words, which the constables permitted. He then prepared to go with them. He was not treated with any roughness. It was too late to take him that night before the magistrate. His friends undertook for his appearance when he should be required, and he went home with them. The constables came for him again on the following afternoon.

Mr. Wingate, when the information was first brought to him, supposed that he had fallen on a nest of Fifth Monarchy men. He enquired, when Bunyan was brought in, how many arms had been found at the meeting. When he learnt that there were no arms, and that it had no political character whatever, he evidently thought it was a matter of no consequence. He told Bunyan that he had been breaking the law, and asked him why he could not attend to his business. Bunyan said that his object in teaching was merely to persuade people to give up their sins. He could do that and attend to his business also.

Wingate answered that the law must be obeyed. He must commit Bunyan for trial at the Quarter Sessions; but he would take bail for him, if his securities would engage that he would not preach again meanwhile. Bunyan refused to be bailed on any such terms. Preach he would and must, and the recognizances would be forfeited. After such an answer, Wingate could only send him to gaol; he could not help himself. The committal was made out, and Bunyan was being taken away, when two of his friends met him, who were acquainted with Wingate, and they begged the constable to wait. They went in to the magistrate. They told him who and what Bunyan was. The magistrate had not the least desire to be hard, and it was agreed that if he would himself give some general promise of a vague kind he might be let go altogether. Bunyan was called back. Another magistrate who knew him had by this time joined Wingate. They both said that they were reluctant to send him to prison. If he would promise them that he would not call the people together any more, he might go home.

They had purposely chosen a form of words which would mean as little as possible. But Bunyan would not accept an evasion. He said that he would not force the people to come together, but if he was in a place where the people were met, he should certainly speak to them. The magistrate repeated that the meetings were unlawful. They would be satisfied if Bunyan would simply promise that he would not call such meetings. It was as plain as possible that they wished to dismiss the case, and they were thrusting words into his mouth which he could use without a mental reservation; but he persisted that there were many ways in which a meeting might be called; if people came together to hear him, knowing that

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he would speak, he might be said to have called them together.

Remonstrances and entreaties were equally useless, and, with extreme unwillingness, they committed him to Bedford gaol to wait for the sessions.

It is not for us to say that Bunyan was too precise. He was himself the best judge of what his conscience and his situation required. To himself, at any rate, his trial was at the moment most severe. He had been left a widower a year or two before, with four young children, one of them blind. He had lately married a second time. His wife was pregnant. The agitation at her husband's arrest brought on premature labour, and she was lying in his house in great danger. He was an affectionate man, and the separation at such a time was peculiarly distressing. After some weeks the Quarter Sessions came on. Bunyan was indicted under the usual form, that he, "being a person of such and such condition, had, since such a time, devilishly and pertinaciously abstained from coming to church to hear Divine service, and was a common upholder of unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our Sovereign Lord the King."

There seems to have been a wish to avoid giving him a formal trial. He was not required to plead, and it may have been thought that he had been punished sufficiently. He was asked why he did not go to church? He said that the Prayer-book was made by man; he was ordered in the Bible to pray with the spirit and the understanding, not with the spirit and the Prayer-book. The magistrates, referring to another Act of Parliament, cautioned Bunyan against finding fault with the Prayer-book, or he would

bring himself into further trouble. Justice Keelin, who presided, said (so Bunyan declares, and it has been the standing jest of his biographers ever since) that the Prayer-book had been in use ever since the Apostles' time. Perhaps the words were that parts of it had been then in use (the Apostles' Creed, for instance), and thus they would have been strictly true. However this might be, they told him kindly, as Mr. Wingate had done, that it would be better for him if he would keep to his proper work. The law had prohibited conventicles. He might teach, if he pleased, in his own family and among his friends. He must not call large numbers of people together. He was as impracticable as before, and the magistrates, being but unregenerate mortals, may be pardoned if they found him provoking. If, he said, it was lawful for him to do good to a few, it must be equally lawful to do good to many. He had a gift, which he was bound to use. If it was sinful for men to meet together to exhort one another to follow Christ, he should sin still.

He was compelling the Court to punish him, whether they wished it or not. He describes the scene as if the choice had rested with the magistrates to convict him or to let him go. If he was bound to do his duty, they were equally bound to do theirs. They took his answers as a plea of guilty to the indictment, and Justice Keelin, who was chairman, pronounced his sentence in the terms of the Act. He was to go to prison for three months; if, at the end of three months, he still refused to conform, he was to be transported; and if he came back without license he would be hanged. Bunyan merely answered, "If I were out of prison to-day, I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow." More might have followed, but the gaoler led him away."

There were three gaols in Bedford, and no evidence has been found to show in which of the three Bunyan was confined. Two of them, the county gaol and the town gaol, were large, roomy buildings. Tradition has chosen the third, a small lock-up, fourteen feet square, which stood over the river between the central arches of the old bridge; and as it appears from the story that he had at times fifty or sixty fellow-prisoners, and as he admits himself that he was treated at first with exceptional kindness, it may be inferred that tradition, in selecting the prison on the bridge, was merely desiring to exhibit the sufferings of the Non-conformist martyr in a sensational form, and that he was never in this prison at all. When it was pulled down in 1811, a gold ring was found in the rubbish, with the initials "J. B." upon it. This is one of the "trifles light as air" which carry conviction to the "jealous" only, and is too slight a foundation on which to assert a fact so inherently improbable.

When the three months were over, the course of law would have brought him again to the bar, when he would have had to choose between conformity and exile. There was still the same desire to avoid extremities, and as the day approached, the clerk of the peace was sent to persuade him into some kind of compliance. Various insurrections had broken out since his arrest, and must have shown him, if he could have reflected, that there was real reason for the temporary enforcement of the Act. He was not asked to give up preaching. He was asked only to give up public preaching. It was well known that he had no disposition to rebellion. Even the going to church was not insisted on. The clerk of the peace told him that he might "exhort his neighbours in private discourse," if only he would not bring the people together in numbers,

which the magistrates would be bound to notice. In this way he might continue his usefulness, and would not be interfered with.

Bunyan knew his own freedom from seditious intentions. He would not see that the magistrates could not suspend the law and make an exception in his favour. They were going already to the utmost limit of indulgence. But the more he disapproved of rebellion, the more punctilious he was in carrying out resistance of another kind which he held to be legitimate. He was a representative person, and he thought that in yielding he would hurt the cause of religious liberty. "The law," he said, "had provided two ways of obeying—one to obey actively, and if he could not in conscience obey actively, then to suffer whatever penalty was inflicted on him."

The clerk of the peace could produce no effect. Bunyan rather looked on him as a false friend trying to entangle him. The three months elapsed, and the magistrates had to determine what was to be done. If Bunyan was brought before them, they must exile him. His case was passed over and he was left in prison, where his wife and children were allowed to visit him daily. He did not understand the law or appreciate their forbearance. He exaggerated his danger. At the worst he could only have been sent to America, where he might have remained as long as he pleased. He feared that he might perhaps be hanged.

"I saw what was coming," he said, "and had two considerations especially on my heart—how to be able to endure, should my imprisonment be long and tedious, and how to be able to encounter death should that be my portion. I was made to see that if I would suffer rightly, I must pass sentence of death upon everything that can properly be

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called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyments all as dead to me, and myself as dead to them. Yet I was a man compassed with infirmities. The parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place (the prison in which he was writing) as the pulling of my flesh from my bones; and that not only because I am too, too fond of those great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the hardships, miseries, and wants my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides. Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow on thee. But yet, thought I, I must venture all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you. I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children. Yet, thought I, I must do it—I must do it. I had this for consideration, that if I should now venture all for God, I engaged God to take care of my concernments. Also, I had dread of the torments of hell, which I was sure they must partake of that for fear of the cross do shrink from their profession. I had this much upon my spirit, that my imprisonment might end in the gallows for aught I could tell. In the condition I now was in I was not fit to die, nor indeed did I think I could if I should be called to it. I feared I might show a weak heart, and give occasion to the enemy. This lay with great trouble on me, for methought I was ashamed to die with a pale face and tottering knees for such a cause as this. The things of God were kept out of my sight. The tempter followed me with, 'But whither

must you go when you die? What will become of you? What evidence have you for heaven and glory, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified? Thus was I tossed many weeks; but I felt it was for the Word and way of God that I was in this condition. God might give me comfort or not as He pleased. I was bound, but He was free—yea, it was my duty to stand to His Word, whether He would ever look upon me or no, or save me at the last. Wherefore, thought I, the point being thus, I am for going on and venturing my eternal state with Christ, whether I have comfort here or no. If God does not come in, thought I, I will leap off the ladder even blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come heaven, come hell. Now was my heart full of comfort."

The ladder was an imaginary ladder, but the resolution was a genuine manly one, such as lies at the bottom of all brave and honourable action. Others who have thought very differently from Bunyan about such matters have felt the same as he felt. Be true to yourself, whatever comes, even if damnation come. Better hell with an honest heart, than heaven with cowardice and insincerity. It was the more creditable to Bunyan, too, because the spectres and hobgoblins had begun occasionally to revisit him.

"Of all temptations I ever met with in my life," he says, "to question the being of God and the truth of His Gospel is the worst, and worst to be borne. When this temptation comes, it takes my girdle from me, and removes the foundation from under me. Though God has visited my soul with never so blessed a discovery of Himself, yet afterwards I have been in my spirit so filled with darkness, that I could not so much as once conceive what that God and that comfort was with which I had been refreshed."

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CHAPTER VI.

THE BEDFORD GAOL.

THE irregularities in the proceedings against Bunyan had perhaps been suggested by the anticipation of the general pardon which was expected in the following spring. At the coronation of Charles, April 23, 1661, an order was issued for the release of prisoners who were in gaol for any offences short of felony. Those who were waiting their trials were to be let go at once. Those convicted and under sentence might sue out a pardon under the Great Seal at any time within a year from the proclamation. Was Bunyan legally convicted or not? He had not pleaded directly to the indictment. No evidence had been heard against him. His trial had been a conversation between himself and the Court. The point had been raised by his friends. His wife had been in London to make interest for him, and a peer had presented a petition in Bunyan's behalf in the House of Lords. The judges had been directed to look again into the matter at the midsummer assizes. The high-sheriff was active in Bunyan's favour. The Judges Twisden, Chester, and no less a person than Sir Matthew Hale, appear to have concluded that his conviction was legal, that he could not be tried again, and that he must apply for pardon in the regular way. His wife, however, at the instance of the sheriff,

obtained a hearing, and they listened courteously to what she had to say. When she had done, Mr. Justice Twisden put the natural question, whether, if her husband was released, he would refrain from preaching in public for the future. If he intended to repeat his offence immediately that he was at liberty, his liberty would only bring him into a worse position. The wife at once said that he dared not leave off preaching as long as he could speak. The judge asked if she thought her husband was to be allowed to do as he pleased. She said that he was a peaceable person, and wished only to be restored to a position in which he could maintain his family. They had four small children who could not help themselves, one of them being blind, and they had nothing to live upon as long as her husband was in prison but the charity of their friends. Hale remarked that she looked very young to have four children. "I am but mother-in-law to them," she said, "having not been married yet full two years. I was with child when my husband was first apprehended, but being young, I being dismayed at the news fell in labour, and so continued for eight days. I was delivered, but my child died."

Hale was markedly kind. He told her that, as the conviction had been recorded, they could not set it aside. She might sue out a pardon if she pleased, or she might obtain "a writ of error," which would be simple and less expensive.

She left the court in tears—tears, however, which were not altogether tears of suffering innocence. "It was not so much," she said, "because they were so hardhearted against me and my husband, but to think what a sad account such poor creatures would have to give at the coming of the Lord." No doubt both Bunyan and she

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thought themselves cruelly injured, and they confounded the law with the administration of it. Persons better informed than they often choose to forget that judges are sworn to administer the law which they find, and rail at them as if the sentences which they are obliged by their oaths to pass were their own personal acts.

A pardon, it cannot be too often said, would have been of no use to Bunyan, because he was determined to persevere in disobeying a law which he considered to be unjust. The most real kindness which could be shown to him was to leave him where he was. His imprisonment was intended to be little more than nominal. His gaoler, not certainly without the sanction of the sheriff, let him go where he pleased; once even so far as London. He used his liberty as he had declared that he would. "I followed my wonted course of preaching," he says, "taking all occasions that were put in my hand to visit the people of God." This was deliberate defiance. The authorities saw that he must be either punished in earnest, or the law would fall into contempt. He admitted that he expected to be "roundly dealt with." His indulgences were withdrawn, and he was put into close confinement.

Sessions now followed sessions, and assizes, assizes. His detention was doubtless irregular, for by law he should have been sent beyond the seas. He petitioned to be brought to trial again, and complained loudly that his petition was not listened to; but no legislator, in framing an Act of Parliament, ever contemplated an offender in so singular a position. Bunyan was simply trying his strength against the Crown and Parliament. The judges and magistrates respected his character, and were unwilling to drive him out of the country; he had himself no wish for liberty on that condition. The only resource,

therefore, was to prevent him forcibly from repeating an offence that would compel them to adopt harsh measures which they were so earnestly trying to avoid.

Such was the world-famous imprisonment of John Bunyan, which has been the subject of so much eloquent declamation. It lasted in all for more than twelve years. It might have ended at any time if he would have promised to confine his addresses to a private circle. It did end after six years. He was released under the first declaration of indulgence; but as he instantly recommenced his preaching, he was arrested again. Another six years went by; he was again let go, and was taken once more immediately after, preaching in a wood. This time he was detained but a few months, and in form more than reality. The policy of the government was then changed, and he was free for the rest of his life.

His condition during his long confinement has furnished a subject for pictures which if correct would be extremely affecting. It is true that, being unable to attend to his usual business, he spent his unoccupied hours in making tags for boot-laces. With this one fact to build on, and with the assumption that the scene of his sufferings was the Bridge Lockhouse, Nonconformist imagination has drawn a "den" for us, "where there was not a yard or a court to walk in for daily exercise;" "a damp and dreary cell;" "a narrow chink which admits a few scanty rays of light to render visible the abode of woe;" "the prisoner, pale and emaciated, seated on the humid earth, pursuing his daily task, to earn the morsel which prolongs his existence and his confinement together. Near him, reclining in pensive sadness, his blind daughter, five other distressed children, and an affectionate wife, whom pinching want and grief have worn down to the gate of death. Ten

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summer suns have rolled over the mansion of his misery whose reviving rays have never once penetrated his sad abode," &c., &c.

If this description resembles or approaches the truth, I can but say that to have thus abandoned to want their most distinguished pastor and his family was intensely discreditable to the Baptist community. English prisons in the seventeenth century were not models of good management. But prisoners, whose friends could pay for them, were not consigned to damp and dreary cells; and in default of evidence of which not a particle exists, I cannot charge so reputable a community with a neglect so scandalous. The entire story is in itself incredible. Bunyan was prosperous in his business. He was respected and looked up to by a large and growing body of citizens, including persons of wealth and position in London. He was a representative sufferer fighting the battle of all the Nonconformists in England. He had active supporters in the town of Bedford and among the gentlemen of the county. The authorities, so far as can be inferred from their actions, tried from the first to deal as gently with him as he would allow them to do. Is it conceivable that the Baptists would have left his family to starve; or that his own confinement would have been made so absurdly and needlessly cruel? Is it not far more likely that he found all the indulgences which money could buy and the rules of the prison would allow? Bunyan is not himself responsible for these wild legends. Their real character appears more clearly when we observe how he was occupied during these years.

Friends, in the first place, had free access to him, and strangers who were drawn to him by reputation; while the gaol was considered a private place, and he was al-

lowed to preach there, at least occasionally, to his fellow-prisoners. Charles Doe, a distinguished Nonconformist, visited him in his confinement, and has left an account of what he saw. "When I was there," he writes, "there were about sixty dissenters besides himself, taken but a little before at a religious meeting at Kaistor, in the county of Bedford, besides two eminent dissenting ministers, Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Dun, by which means the prison was much crowded. Yet, in the midst of all that hurry, I heard Mr. Bunyan both preach and pray with that mighty spirit of faith and plerophory of Divine assistance, that he made me stand and wonder. Here they could sing without fear of being overheard, no informers prowling round, and the world shut out."

This was not all. A fresh and more severe Conventicle Act was passed in 1670. Attempts were made to levy fines in the town of Bedford. There was a riot there. The local officers refused to assist in quelling it. The shops were shut. Bedford was occupied by soldiers. Yet, at this very time, Bunyan was again allowed to go abroad through general connivance. He spent his nights with his family. He even preached now and then in the woods. Once, when he had intended to be out for the night, information was given to a clerical magistrate in the neighbourhood, who disliked him, and a constable was sent to ascertain if the prisoners were all within ward. Bunyan had received a hint of what was coming. He was in his place when the constable came; and the governor of the gaol is reported to have said to him, "You may go out when you please, for you know better when to return than I can tell you." Parliament might pass laws, but the execution of them depended on the local authorities. Before the Declaration of Indulgence, the

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Baptist church in Bedford was reopened. Bunyan, while still nominally in confinement, attended its meetings. In 1671 he became an Elder; in December of that year he was chosen Pastor. The question was raised whether, as a prisoner, he was eligible. The objection would not have been set aside had he been unable to undertake the duties of the office. These facts prove conclusively that, for a part at least of the twelve years, the imprisonment was little more than formal. He could not have been in the Bridge gaol when he had sixty fellow-prisoners, and was able to preach to them in private. It is unlikely that at any time he was made to suffer any greater hardships than were absolutely inevitable.

But whether Bunyan's confinement was severe or easy, it was otherwise of inestimable value to him. It gave him leisure to read and reflect. Though he preached often, yet there must have been intervals, perhaps long intervals, of compulsory silence. The excitement of perpetual speech-making is fatal to the exercise of the higher qualities. The periods of calm enabled him to discover powers in himself of which he might otherwise have never known the existence. Of books he had but few; for a time only the Bible and Foxe's *Martyrs*. But the Bible thoroughly known is a literature of itself—the rarest and richest in all departments of thought or imagination which exists. Foxe's *Martyrs*, if he had a complete edition of it, would have given him a very adequate knowledge of history. With those two books he had no cause to complain of intellectual destitution. He must have read more, however. He knew George Herbert—perhaps Spenser—perhaps *Paradise Lost*. But of books, except of the Bible, he was at no time a great student. Happily for himself, he had no other book of Divinity, and he needed none.



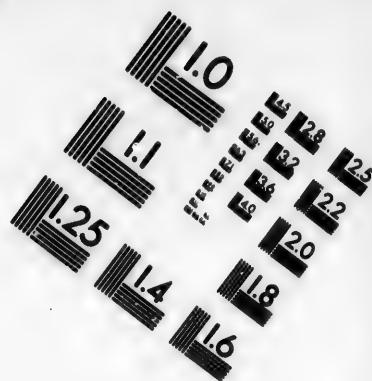
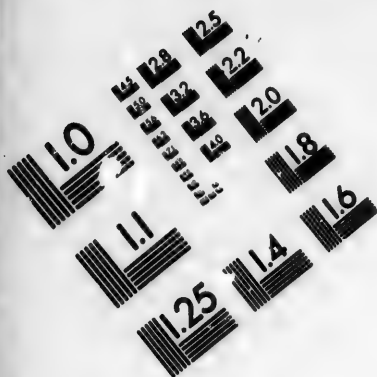
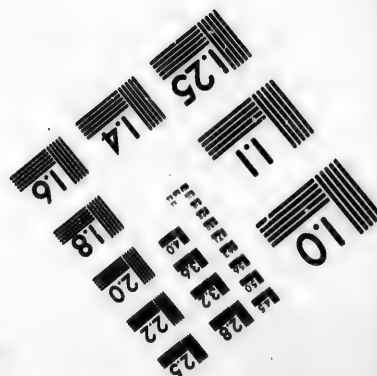
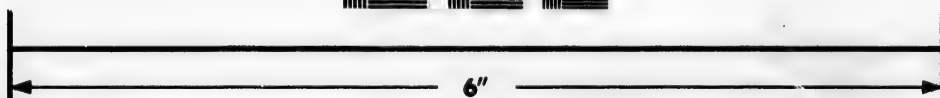
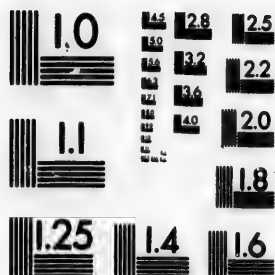


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His real study was human life as he had seen it, and the human heart as he had experienced the workings of it. Though he never mastered successfully the art of verse, he had other gifts which belong to a true poet. He had imagination, if not of the highest, yet of a very high order. He had infinite inventive humour, tenderness, and, better than all, powerful masculine sense. To obtain the use of these faculties he needed only composure, and this his imprisonment secured for him. He had published several theological compositions before his arrest, which have relatively little value. Those which he wrote in prison—even on theological subjects—would alone have made him a reputation as a Nonconformist divine. In no other writings are the peculiar views of Evangelical Calvinism brought out more clearly, or with a more heartfelt conviction of their truth. They have furnished an arsenal from which English Protestant divines have ever since equipped themselves. The most beautiful of them, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, is his own spiritual biography, which contains the account of his early history. The first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* was composed there as an amusement. To this, and to his other works which belong to literature, I shall return in a future chapter.

Visitors who saw him in the gaol found his manner and presence as impressive as his writings. "He was mild and affable in conversation," says one of them, "not given to loquacity or to much discourse, unless some urgent occasion required. It was observed he never spoke of himself or of his talents, but seemed low in his own eyes. He was never heard to reproach or revile any, whatever injury he received, but rather rebuked those who did so. He managed all things with such exactness as if he had made it his study not to give offence."

The final *Declaration of Indulgence* came at last, bringing with it the privilege for which Bunyan had fought and suffered. Charles II. cared as little for liberty as his father or his brother, but he wished to set free the Catholics, and as a step towards it he conceded a general toleration to the Protestant Dissenters. Within two years of the passing of the Conventicle Act of 1670, this and every other penal law against Nonconformists was suspended. They were allowed to open their "meeting-houses" for "worship and devotion," subject only to a few easy conditions. The localities were to be specified in which chapels were required, and the ministers were to receive their licenses from the Crown. To prevent suspicions, the Roman Catholics were for the present excluded from the benefit of the concession. Mass could be said, as before, only in private houses. A year later, the Proclamation was confirmed by Act of Parliament.

Thus Bunyan's long imprisonment was ended. The cause was won. He had been its foremost representative and champion, and was one of the first persons to receive the benefit of the change of policy. He was now forty-four years old. The order for his release was signed on May 8, 1672. His license as pastor of the Baptist chapel at Bedford was issued on the 9th. He established himself in a small house in the town. "When he came abroad," says one, "he found his temporal affairs were gone to wreck, and he had, as to them, to begin again as if he had newly come into the world. But yet he was not destitute of friends who had all along supported him with necessities, and had been very good to his family; so that by their assistance, getting things a little about him again, he resolved, as much as possible, to decline worldly business, and give himself wholly up to the service of God." As

much as possible; but not entirely. In 1685, being afraid of a return of persecution, he made over, as a precaution, his whole estate to his wife: "All and singular his goods, chattels, debts, ready money, plate, rings, household stuff, apparel, utensils, brass, pewter, bedding, and all his other substance." In this deed he still describes himself as a brazier. The language is that of a man in easy, if not ample, circumstances. "Though, by reason of losses which he sustained by imprisonment," says another biographer, "his treasures swelled not to excess, he always had sufficient to live decently and creditably." His writings and his sufferings had made him famous throughout England. He became the actual head of the Baptist community. Men called him, half in irony, half in seriousness, Bishop Bunyan, and he passed the rest of his life honourably and innocently, occupied in writing, preaching, district visiting, and opening daughter churches. Happy in his work, happy in the sense that his influence was daily extending—spreading over his own country, and to the far-off settlements in America, he spent his last years in his own Land of Beulah, Doubting Castle out of sight, and the towers and minarets of Emmanuel Land growing nearer and clearer as the days went on.

He had not detected, or at least, at first, he did not detect, the sinister purpose which lay behind the Indulgence. The exception of the Roman Catholics gave him perfect confidence in the Government, and after his release he published a *Discourse upon Antichrist*, with a preface, in which he credited Charles with the most righteous intentions, and urged his countrymen to be loyal and faithful to him. His object in writing it, he said, "was to testify his loyalty to the King, his love to the brethren, and his service to his country." Antichrist was, of course, the

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Pope, the deadliest of all enemies to vital Christianity. To its kings and princes England owed its past deliverance from him. To kings England must look for his final overthrow.

"As the noble King Henry VIII. did cast down the Antichristian worship, so he cast down the laws that held it up; so also did the good King Edward, his son. The brave Queen Elizabeth, also, the sister of King Edward, left of things of this nature, to her lasting fame, behind her." Cromwell he dared not mention—perhaps he did not wish to mention him. But he evidently believed that there was better hope in Charles Stuart than in conspiracy and revolution.

"Kings," he said, "must be the men that shall down with Antichrist, and they shall down with her in God's time. God hath begun to draw the hearts of some of them from her already, and He will set them in time against her round about. If, therefore, they do not that work so fast as we would have them, let us exercise patience and hope in God. 'Tis a wonder they go as fast as they do, since the concerns of whole kingdoms lie upon their shoulders, and there are so many Sanballats and Tobias's to flatter them and misinform them. Let the King have visibly a place in your hearts, and with heart and mouth give God thanks for him. He is a better Saviour of us than we may be aware of, and hath delivered us from more deaths than we can tell how to think. We are bidden to give God thanks for all men, and in the first place for kings, and all that are in authority. Be not angry with them—no, not in thy thought. But consider, if they go not in the work of Reformation so fast as thou wouldst they should, the fault may be thine. Know that thou also hast thy cold and chill frames of heart, and sit-

test still when thou shouldest be up and doing. Pray for the long life of the King. Pray that God would give wisdom and judgment to the King; pray that God would discern all plots and conspiracies against his person and government. I do confess myself one of the old-fashioned professors that wish to fear God and honour the King. I am also for blessing them that curse me, for doing good to them that hate me, and for praying for them that despitefully use me and persecute me; and I have had more peace in the practice of these things than all the world are aware of."

The Stuarts, both Charles and James, were grateful for Bunyan's services. The Nonconformists generally went up and down in Royal favour; lost their privileges and regained them as their help was needed or could be dispensed with. But Bunyan was never more molested. He did what he liked. He preached where he pleased, and no one troubled him or called him to account. He was not insincere. His constancy in enduring so long an imprisonment which a word from him would have ended, lifts him beyond the reach of unworthy suspicions. But he disapproved always of violent measures. His rule was to submit to the law; and where, as he said, he could not obey actively, then to bear with patience the punishment that might be inflicted on him. Perhaps he really hoped, as long as hope was possible, that good might come out of the Stuarts.

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CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AND DEATH OF MR. BADMAN.

To his contemporaries Bunyan was known as the Nonconformist Martyr, and the greatest living Protestant preacher. To us he is mainly interesting through his writings, and especially through *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Although he possessed in a remarkable degree the gift of expressing himself in written words, he had himself no value for literature. He cared simply for spiritual truth, and literature in his eyes was only useful as a means of teaching it. Every thing with which a reasonable man could concern himself was confined within the limits of Christian faith and practice. Ambition was folly. Amusement was idle trifling in a life so short as man's, and with issues so far-reaching depending upon it. To understand, and to make others understand, what Christ had done, and what Christ required men to do, was the occupation of his whole mind, and no object ever held his attention except in connection with it. With a purpose so strict, and a theory of religion so precise, there is usually little play for imagination or feeling. Though we read Protestant theology as a duty, we find it as dry in the mouth as sawdust. The literature which would please must represent nature, and nature refuses to be bound into our dogmatic systems. No object can be pictured truly, except by a mind which has sympathy with it. Shakspeare no more hates Iago

than Iago hates himself. He allows Iago to exhibit himself in his own way, as nature does. Every character, if justice is to be done to it, must be painted at its best, as it appears to itself; and a man impressed deeply with religious convictions is generally incapable of the sympathy which would give him an insight into what he disapproves and dislikes. And yet Bunyan, intensely religious as he was, and narrow as his theology was, is always human. His genius remains fresh and vigorous under the least promising conditions. All mankind being under sin together, he has no favourites to flatter, no opponents to misrepresent. There is a kindliness in his descriptions even of the Evil One's attacks upon himself.

The Pilgrim's Progress, though professedly an allegoric story of the Protestant plan of salvation, is conceived in the large, wide spirit of humanity itself. Anglo-Catholic and Lutheran, Calvinist and Deist can alike read it with delight, and find their own theories in it. Even the Romanist has only to blot out a few paragraphs, and can discover no purer model of a Christian life to place in the hands of his children. The religion of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is the religion which must be always and everywhere, as long as man believes that he has a soul and is responsible for his actions; and thus it is that, while theological folios once devoured as manna from Heaven now lie on the bookshelves dead as Egyptian mummies, this book is wrought into the mind and memory of every well-conditioned English or American child; while the matured man, furnished with all the knowledge which literature can teach him, still finds the adventures of Christian as charming as the adventures of Ulysses or Æneas. He sees there the reflexion of himself, the familiar features of his own nature, which remain the same from era to era. Time

cannot impair its interest, or intellectual progress make it cease to be true to experience.

But *The Pilgrim's Progress*, though the best known, is not the only work of imagination which Bunyan produced; he wrote another religious allegory, which Lord Macaulay thought would have been the best of its kind in the world if *The Pilgrim's Progress* had not existed. *The Life of Mr. Badman*, though now scarcely read at all, contains a vivid picture of rough English life in the days of Charles II. Bunyan was a poet, too, in the technical sense of the word; and though he disclaimed the name, and though rhyme and metre were to him as Saul's armour to David, the fine quality of his mind still shows itself in the uncongenial accoutrements.

It has been the fashion to call Bunyan's verse doggerel; but no verse is doggerel which has a sincere and rational meaning in it. Goethe, who understood his own trade, says that the test of poetry is the substance which remains when the poetry is reduced to prose. Bunyan had infinite invention. His mind was full of objects which he had gathered at first-hand, from observation and reflection. He had excellent command of the English language, and could express what he wished with sharp, defined outlines, and without the waste of a word. The rhythmical structure of his prose is carefully correct. Scarcely a syllable is ever out of place. His ear for verse, though less true, is seldom wholly at fault, and, whether in prose or verse, he had the superlative merit that he could never write nonsense. If one of the motives of poetical form be to clothe thought and feeling in the dress in which it can be most easily remembered, Bunyan's lines are often as successful as the best lines of Quarles or George Herbert. Who, for instance, could forget these?—

"Sin is the worm of hell, the lasting fire:
 Hell would soon lose its heat should sin expire;
 Better sinless in hell than to be where
 Heaven is, and to be found a sinner there."

Or these, on persons whom the world calls men of spirit:—

"Though you dare crack a coward's crown,
 Or quarrel for a pin,
 You dare not on the wicked frown,
 Or speak against their sin."

The *Book of Ruth* and the *History of Joseph*, done into blank verse, are really beautiful idylls. The substance with which he worked, indeed, is so good that there would be a difficulty in spoiling it completely; but the prose of the translation in the English Bible, faultless as it is, loses nothing in Bunyan's hands, and if we found these poems in the collected works of a poet laureate, we should consider that a difficult task had been accomplished successfully. Bunyan felt, like the translators of the preceding century, that the text was sacred, that his duty was to give the exact meaning of it, without epithets or ornaments, and thus the original grace is completely preserved.

Of a wholly different kind, and more after Quarles's manner, is a collection of thoughts in verse, which he calls a book for boys and girls. All his observations ran naturally in one direction; to minds possessed and governed by religion, nature—be their creed what it may—is always a parable reflecting back their own views.

But how neatly expressed are these *Meditations upon an Egg*:—

"The egg's no chick by falling from a hen,
 Nor man's a Christian till Christ's born again;

The egg's at first contained in the shell,
 Men afore grace in sin and darkness dwell ;
 The egg, when laid, by warmth is made a chicken,
 And Christ by grace the dead in sin doth quicken ;
 The egg when first a chick the shell's its prison,
 So flesh to soul who yet with Christ is risen."

Or this, *On a Swallow* :—

"This pretty bird! Oh, how she flies and sings ;
 But could she do so if she had not wings ?
 Her wings bespeak my faith, her songs my peace ;
 When I believe and sing, my doubtings cease.

Though the Globe Theatre was, in the opinion of Non-conformists, "the heart of Satan's empire," Bunyan must yet have known something of Shakspeare. In the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* we find :—

"Who would true valour see,
 Let him come hither ;
 One here will constant be,
 Come wind, come weather."

The resemblance to the song in *As You Like It* is too near to be accidental :—

"Who doth ambition shun,
 And loves to be in the sun ;
 Seeking the food he eats,
 And pleased with what he gets,
 Come hither, come hither, come hither.
 Here shall be no enemy,
 Save winter and rough weather."

Bunyan may, perhaps, have heard the lines, and the rhymes may have clung to him without his knowing whence they came. But he would never have been heard of outside his own communion, if his imagination had found no better form of expression for itself than verse.

His especial gift was for allegory, the single form of imaginative fiction which he would not have considered trivial, and his especial instrument was plain, unaffected Saxon prose. *The Holy War* is a people's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* in one. The *Life of Mr. Badman* is a didactic tale, describing the career of a vulgar, middle-class, unprincipled scoundrel.

These are properly Bunyan's "works," the results of his life, so far as it affects the present generation of Englishmen; and as they are little known, I shall give an account of each of them.

The *Life of Badman* is presented as a dialogue between Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Attentive. Mr. Wiseman tells the story, Mr. Attentive comments upon it. The names recall Bunyan's well-known manner. The figures stand for typical characters; but as the *dramatis personæ* of many writers of fiction, while professing to be beings of flesh and blood, are no more than shadows, so Bunyan's shadows are solid men, whom we can feel and handle.

Mr. Badman is, of course, one of the "reprobate." Bunyan considered theoretically that a reprobate may to outward appearance have the graces of a saint, and that there may be little in his conduct to mark his true character. A reprobate may be sorry for his sins, he may repent and lead a good life. He may reverence good men, and may try to resemble them; he may pray, and his prayers may be answered; he may have the spirit of God, and may receive another heart, and yet he may be under the covenant of works, and may be eternally lost. This Bunyan could say while he was writing theology; but art has its rules as well as its more serious sister, and when he had to draw a living specimen, he drew him as he had seen him in his own Bedford neighbourhood.

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Badman showed from childhood a propensity for evil. He was so "addicted to lying that his parents could not distinguish when he was speaking the truth. He would invent, tell, and stand to the lies which he invented, with such an audacious face, that one might read in his very countenance the symptoms of a hard and desperate heart. It was not the fault of his parents; they were much dejected at the beginnings of their son; nor did he want counsel and correction, if that would have made him better; but all availed nothing."

Lying was not Badman's only fault. He took to pilfering and stealing. He robbed his neighbours' orchards. He picked up money if he found it lying about. Especially, Mr. Wiseman notes that he hated Sundays. "Reading Scriptures, godly conferences, repeating of sermons and prayers, were things that he could not away with." "He was an enemy to that day, because more restraint was laid upon him from his own ways than was possible on any other." Mr. Wiseman never doubts that the Puritan Sunday ought to have been appreciated by little boys. If a child disliked it, the cause could only be his own wickedness. Young Badman "was greatly given also to swearing and cursing." "He made no more of it" than Mr. Wiseman made "of telling his fingers." "He counted it a glory to swear and curse, and it was as natural to him as to eat, drink, or sleep." Bunyan, in this description, is supposed to have taken the picture from himself. But too much may be made of this. He was thinking, perhaps, of what he might have been if God's grace had not preserved him. He himself was saved. Badman is represented as given over from the first. Anecdotes, however, are told of contemporary providential judgments upon swearers, which had much impressed Bunyan. One was of

a certain Dorothy Mately, a woman whose business was to wash rubbish at the Derby lead-mines. Dorothy (it was in the year when Bunyan was first imprisoned) had stolen twopence from the coat of a boy who was working near her. When the boy taxed her with having robbed him, she wished the ground might swallow her up if she had ever touched his money. Presently after, some children, who were watching her, saw a movement in the bank on which she was standing. They called to her to take care, but it was too late. The bank fell in, and she was carried down along with it. A man ran to help her, but the sides of the pit were crumbling round her: a large stone fell on her head; the rubbish followed, and she was overwhelmed. When she was dug out afterwards, the pence were found in her pocket. Bunyan was perfectly satisfied that her death was supernatural. To discover miracles is not peculiar to Catholics. They will be found wherever there is an active belief in immediate providential government.

Those more cautious in forming their conclusions will think, perhaps, that the woman was working above some shaft in the mine, that the crust had suddenly broken, and that it would equally have fallen in, when gravitation required it to fall, if Dorothy Mately had been a saint. They will remember the words about the Tower of Siloam. But to return to Badman.

His father, being unable to manage so unpromising a child, bound him out as an apprentice. The master to whom he was assigned was as good a man as the father could find: upright, God-fearing, and especially considerate of his servants. He never worked them too hard. He left them time to read and pray. He admitted no light or mischievous books within his doors. He was not one of those whose religion "hung as a cloke in his house, and

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was never seen on him when he went abroad." His household was as well fed and cared for as himself, and he required nothing of others of which he did not set them an example in his own person.

This man did his best to reclaim young Badman, and was particularly kind to him. But his exertions were thrown away. The good-for-nothing youth read filthy romances on the sly. He fell asleep in church, or made eyes at the pretty girls. He made acquaintance with low companions. He became profligate, got drunk at ale-houses, sold his master's property to get money, or stole it out of the cash-box. Thrice he ran away and was taken back again. The third time he was allowed to go. "The House of Correction would have been the most fit for him, but thither his master was loath to send him, for the love he bore his father."

He was again apprenticed; this time to a master like himself. Being wicked, he was given over to wickedness. The ways of it were not altogether pleasant. He was fed worse and he was worked harder than he had been before; when he stole, or neglected his business, he was beaten. He liked his new place, however, better than the old. "At least, there was no godliness in the house, which he hated worst of all."

So far, Bunyan's hero was travelling the usual road of the Idle Apprentice, and the gallows would have been the commonplace ending of it. But this would not have answered Bunyan's purpose. He wished to represent the good-for-nothing character, under the more instructive aspect of worldly success, which bad men may arrive at as well as good, if they are prudent and cunning. Bunyan gives his hero every chance. He submits him from the first to the best influences; he creates opportunities for re-

penitence at every stage of a long career—opportunities which the reprobate nature cannot profit by, yet increases its guilt by neglecting.

Badman's term being out, his father gives him money and sets him up as a tradesman on his own account. Mr. Attentive considers this to have been a mistake. Mr. Wiseman answers that, even in the most desperate cases, kindness in parents is more likely to succeed than severity, and, if it fails, they will have the less to reproach themselves with. The kindness is, of course, thrown away. Badman continues a loose blackguard, extravagant, idle, and dissolute. He comes to the edge of ruin. His situation obliges him to think; and now the interest of the story begins. He must repair his fortune by some means or other. The easiest way is by marriage. There was a young orphan lady in the neighbourhood, who was well off and her own mistress. She was a "professor," eagerly given to religion, and not so wise as she ought to have been. Badman pretends to be converted. He reforms, or seems to reform. He goes to meeting, sings hymns, adopts the most correct form of doctrine, tells the lady that he does not want her money, but that he wants a companion who will go with him along the road to Heaven. He was plausible, good-looking, and, to all appearance, as absorbed as herself in the one thing needful. The congregation warn her, but to no purpose. She marries him, and finds what she has done too late. In her fortune he has all that he wanted. He swears at her, treats her brutally, brings prostitutes into his house, laughs at her religion, and at length orders her to give it up. When she refuses, Bunyan introduces a special feature of the times, and makes Badman threaten to turn informer, and bring her favourite minister to gaol. The informers were the natu-

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ral but most accursed products of the Conventicle Acts. Popular abhorrence relieved itself by legends of the dreadful judgments which had overtaken these wretches.

In St. Neots an informer was bitten by a dog. The wound gangrened, and the flesh rotted off his bones. In Bedford "there was one W.S." (Bunyan probably knew him too well), "a man of very wicked life, and he, when there seemed to be countenance given it, would needs turn informer. Well, so he did, and was as diligent in his business as most of them could be. He would watch at nights, climb trees, and range the woods of days, if possible to find out the meeters, for then they were forced to meet in the fields. Yea, he would curse them bitterly, and swore most fearfully what he would do to them when he found them. Well, after he had gone on like a Bedlam in his course awhile, and had done some mischief to the people, he was stricken by the hand of God. He was taken with a faltering in his speech, a weakness in the back sinews of his neck, that oftentimes he held up his head by strength of hand. After this his speech went quite away, and he could speak no more than a swine or a bear. Like one of them he would gruntle and make an ugly noise, according as he was offended or pleased, or would have anything done. He walked about till God had made a sufficient spectacle of his judgments for his sin, and then, on a sudden, he was stricken, and died miserably."

Badman, says Mr. Wiseman, "had malice enough in his heart" to turn informer, but he was growing prudent and had an eye to the future. As a tradesman he had to live by his neighbours. He knew that they would not forgive him, so "he had that wit in his anger that he did it not." Nothing else was neglected to make the unfortunate wife miserable. She bore him seven children, also typical fig-

ures. "One was a very gracious child, that loved its mother dearly. This child Mr. Badman could not abide, and it oftenest felt the weight of its father's fingers. Three were as bad as himself. The others that remained became a kind of mongrel professors, not so bad as their father nor so good as their mother, but betwixt them both. They had their mother's notions and their father's actions. Their father did not like them because they had their mother's tongue. Their mother did not like them because they had their father's heart and life, nor were they fit company for good or bad. They were forced with Esau to join in affinity with Ishmael—to wit, to look out for a people that were hypocrites like themselves, and with them they matched and lived and died."

Badman, meanwhile, with the help of his wife's fortune, grew into an important person, and his character becomes a curious study. "He went," we are told, "to school with the devil, from his childhood to the end of his life." He was shrewd in matters of business, began to extend his operations, and "drove a great trade." He carried a double face. He was evil with the evil. He pretended to be good with the good. In religion he affected to be a free-thinker, careless of death and judgment, and ridiculing those who feared them "as frightened with unseen bugbears." But he wore a mask when it suited him, and admired himself for the ease with which he could assume whatever aspect was convenient. "I can be religious and irreligious," he said; "I can be anything or nothing. I can swear, and speak against swearing. I can lie, and speak against lying. I can drink, wench, be unclean, and defraud, and not be troubled for it. I can enjoy myself, and am master of my own ways, not they of me. This I have attained with much study, care, and pains." "An

Atheist Badman was, if such a thing as an Atheist could be. He was not alone in that mystery. There was abundance of men of the same mind and the same principle. He was only an arch or chief one among them."

Mr. Badman now took to speculation, which Bunyan's knowledge of business enabled him to describe with instructive minuteness. His adventures were on a large scale, and by some mistakes and by personal extravagance he had nearly ruined himself a second time. In this condition he discovered a means, generally supposed to be a more modern invention, of "getting money by hatfuls."

"He gave a sudden and great rush into several men's debts to the value of four or five thousand pounds, driving at the same time a very great trade by selling many things for less than they cost him, to get him custom and blind his creditors' eyes. When he had well feathered his nest with other men's goods and money, after a little while he breaks; while he had by craft and knavery made so sure of what he had that his creditors could not touch a penny. He sends mournful, sugared letters to them, desiring them not to be severe with him, for he bore towards all men an honest mind, and would pay them as far as he was able. He talked of the greatness of the taxes, the badness of the times, his losses by bad debts, and he brought them to a composition to take five shillings in the pound. His release was signed and sealed, and Mr. Badman could now put his head out-of-doors again, and be a better man than when he shut up shop by several thousands of pounds."

Twice or three times he repeated the same trick with equal success. It is likely enough that Bunyan was drawing from life, and perhaps from a member of his own congregation; for he says that "he had known a professor do it." He detested nothing so much as sham religion,

which was put on as a pretence. "A professor," he exclaims, "and practise such villanies as these! Such an one is not worthy the name. Go, professors, go—leave off profession, unless you will lead your lives according to your profession. Better never profess than make profession a stalking-horse to sin, deceit, the devil, and hell."

Bankruptcy was not the only art by which Badman piled up his fortune. The seventeenth century was not so far behind us as we sometimes persuade ourselves. "He dealt by deceitful weights and measures. He kept weights to buy by, and weights to sell by; measures to buy by, and measures to sell by. Those he bought by were too big, and those he sold by were too little. If he had to do with other men's weights and measures, he could use a thing called sleight of hand. He had the art, besides, to misreckon men in their accounts, whether by weight or measure or money; and if a question was made of his faithful dealing, he had his servants ready that would vouch and swear to his look or word. He would sell goods that cost him not the best price by far, for as much as he sold his best of all for. He had also a trick to mingle his commodity, that that which was bad might go off with the least mistrust. If any of his customers paid him money, he would call for payment a second time, and if they could not produce good and sufficient ground of the payment, a hundred to one but they paid it again."

"To buy in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest," was Mr. Badman's common rule in business. According to modern political economy, it is the cardinal principle of wholesome trade. In Bunyan's opinion it was knavery in disguise, and certain to degrade and demoralise every one who acted upon it. Bunyan had evidently

thought on the subject. Mr. Attentive is made to object:—

“But you know that there is no settled price set by God upon any commodity that is bought or sold under the sun; but all things that we buy and sell do ebb and flow as to price, like the tide. How then shall a man of tender conscience do, neither to wrong the seller, buyer, nor himself in the buying and selling of commodities?”

Mr. Wiseman answers in the spirit of our old Acts of Parliament, before political economy was invented:—

“Let a man have conscience towards God, charity to his neighbours, and moderation in dealing. Let the tradesman consider that there is not that in great gettings and in abundance which the most of men do suppose; for all that a man has over and above what serves for his present necessity and supply serves only to feed the lusts of the eye. Be thou confident that God’s eyes are upon thy ways; that He marks them, writes them down, and seals them up in a bag against the time to come. Be sure that thou rememberest that thou knowest not the day of thy death. Thou shalt have nothing that thou mayest so much as carry away in thy hand. Guilt shall go with thee if thou hast gotten thy substance dishonestly, and they to whom thou shalt leave it shall receive it to their hurt. These things duly considered, I will shew thee how thou should’st live in the practical part of this art. Art thou to buy or sell? If thou sellest, do not commend. If thou buyest, do not dispraise any otherwise but to give the thing that thou hast to do with its just value and worth. Art thou a seller, and do things grow cheap? set not thy hand to help or hold them up higher. Art thou a buyer, and do things grow dear? use no cunning or deceitful language to pull them down. Leave things to the Providence

of God, and do thou with moderation submit to his hand. Hurt not thy neighbour by crying out, Scarcity, scarcity! beyond the truth of things. Especially take heed of doing this by way of a prognostic for time to come. This wicked thing may be done by hoarding up (food) when the hunger and necessity of the poor calls for it. If things rise, do thou be grieved. Be also moderate in all thy sellings, and be sure let the poor have a pennyworth, and sell thy corn to those who are in necessity; which thou wilt do when thou showest mercy to the poor in thy selling to him, and when thou undersellest the market for his sake because he is poor. This is to buy and sell with a good conscience. The buyer thou wrongest not, thy conscience thou wrongest not, thyself thou wrongest not, for God will surely recompense with thee."

These views of Bunyan's are at issue with modern science, but his principles and ours are each adjusted to the objects of desire which good men in those days, and good men in ours, have respectively set before themselves. If wealth means money, as it is now assumed to do, Bunyan is wrong, and modern science right. If wealth means moral welfare, then those who aim at it will do well to follow Bunyan's advice. It is to be feared that this part of his doctrine is less frequently dwelt upon by those who profess to admire and follow him, than the theory of imputed righteousness or justification by faith.

Mr. Badman, by his various ingenuities, became a wealthy man. His character as a tradesman could not have been a secret from his neighbours, but money and success coloured it over. The world spoke well of him. He became "proud and haughty," took part in public affairs, "counted himself as wise as the wisest in the country, as good as the best, and as beautiful as he that had the most

of it." "He took great delight in praising himself, and as much in the praises that others gave him." "He could not abide that any should think themselves above him, or that their wit and personage should be by others set before his." He had an objection, nevertheless, to being called proud, and when Mr. Attentive asked why, his companion answered with a touch which reminds us of De Foe, that "*Badman did not tell him the reason.* He supposed it to be that which was common to all vile persons. They loved their vice, but cared not to bear its name." Badman said he was unwilling to seem singular and fantastical, and in this way he justified his expensive and luxurious way of living. Singularity of all kinds he affected to dislike, and for that reason his special pleasure was to note the faults of professors. "If he could get anything by the end that had scandal in it—if it did but touch professors, however falsely reported—oh, then he would glory, laugh and be glad, and lay it upon the whole party. Hang these rogues, he would say, there is not a barrel better hering in all the holy brotherhood of them. Like to like, quote the devil to the collier. This is your precise crew, and then he would send them all home with a curse."

Thus Bunyan developed his specimen scoundrel, till he brought him to the high altitudes of worldly prosperity; skilful in every villanous art, skilful equally in keeping out of the law's hands, and feared, admired, and respected by all his neighbours. The reader who desires to see Providence vindicated would now expect to find him detected in some crimes by which justice could lay hold, and poetical retribution fall upon him in the midst of his triumph. An inferior artist would certainly have allowed his story to end in this way. But Bunyan, satisfied though he was that dramatic judgments did overtake of-

fenders in this world with direct and startling appropriateness, was yet aware that it was often otherwise, and that the worst fate which could be inflicted on a completely worthless person was to allow him to work out his career unvisited by any penalties which might have disturbed his conscience and occasioned his amendment. He chose to make his story natural, and to confine himself to natural machinery. The judgment to come Mr. Badman laughed at "as old woman's fable," but his courage lasted only as long as he was well and strong. One night, as he was riding home drunk, his horse fell, and he broke his leg. "You would not think," says Mr. Wiseman, "how he swore at first. Then, coming to himself, and finding he was badly hurt, he cried out, after the manner of such, Lord, help me! Lord, have mercy on me! good God, deliver me! and the like. He was picked up and taken home, where he lay some time. In his pain he called on God; but whether it was that his sin might be pardoned, and his soul saved, or whether to be rid of his pain," Mr. Wiseman "could not determine." This leads to several stories of drunkards which Bunyan clearly believed to be literally true. Such facts or legends were the food on which his mind had been nourished. They were in the air which contemporary England breathed.

"I have read, in Mr. Clarke's *Looking-glass for Sinners*, Mr. Wiseman said, "that upon a time a certain drunken fellow boasted in his cups that there was neither heaven nor hell. Also, he said he believed that man had no soul, and that for his own part he would sell his soul to any that would buy it. Then did one of his companions buy it of him for a cup of wine, and presently the devil, in man's shape, bought it of that man again at the same price; and so, in the presence of them all, laid hold of the

soul-seller, and carried him away through the air, so that he was no more heard of."

Again :

"There was one at Salisbury drinking and carousing at a tavern, and he drank a health to the devil, saying that if the devil would not come and pledge him, he could not believe that there was either God or devil. Whereupon his companions, stricken with fear, hastened out of the room; and presently after, hearing a hideous noise and smelling a stinking savour, the vintner ran into the chamber, and coming in he missed his guest, and found the window broken, the iron bars in it bowed and all bloody, but the man was never heard of afterwards."

These visitations were answers to a direct challenge of the evil spirit's existence, and were thus easy to be accounted for. But no devil came for Mr. Badman. He clung to his unfortunate, neglected wife. "She became his dear wife, his godly wife, his honest wife, his duck, his dear and all." He thought he was dying, and hell and all its horrors rose up before him. "Fear was in his face, and in his tossings to and fro he would often say, I am undone, I am undone; my vile life hath undone me!" Atheism did not help him. It never helped anyone in such extremities, Mr. Wiseman said, as he had known in another instance:—

"There was a man dwelt about twelve miles off from us," he said, "that had so trained up himself in his Atheistical notions, that at last he attempted to write a book against Jesus Christ and the Divine authority of the Scriptures. I think it was not printed. Well, after many days God struck him with sickness, whereof he died. So, being sick, and musing of his former doings, the book that he had written tore his conscience as a lion would

tear a kid. Some of my friends went to see him; and as they were in his chamber one day, he hastily called for pen and ink and paper, which, when it was given to him, he took it and writ to this purpose: "I, such an one in such a town, must go to hell-fire for writing a book against Jesus Christ." He would have leaped out of the window to have killed himself, but was by them prevented of that, so he died in his bed by such a death as it was."

Badman seemed equally miserable. But death-bed repentances, as Bunyan sensibly said, were seldom of more value than "the howling of a dog." The broken leg was set again. The pain of body went, and with it the pain of mind. "He was assisted out of his uneasiness," says Bunyan, with a characteristic hit at the scientific views then coming into fashion, "by his doctor," who told him that his alarms had come "from an affection of the brain, caused by want of sleep;" "they were nothing but vapours and the effects of his distemper." He gathered his spirits together, and became the old man once more. His poor wife, who had believed him penitent, broke her heart, and died of the disappointment. The husband gave himself up to loose connections with abandoned women, one of whom persuaded him one day, when he was drunk, to make her a promise of marriage, and she held him to his word. Then retribution came upon him, with the coarse commonplace, yet rigid justice which fact really deals out. The second bad wife avenged the wrongs of the first innocent wife. He was mated with a companion "who could fit him with cursing and swearing, give him oath for oath, and curse for curse. They would fight, and fly at each other like cat and dog." In this condition—for Bunyan, before sending his hero to his account, gave him a protracted spell of earthly discomforts—they lived

sixteen years together. Fortune, who had so long favoured his speculations, turned her back upon him. Between them they "sinned all his wealth away," and at last parted "as poor as howlets."

Then came the end. Badman was still in middle life, and had naturally a powerful constitution; but his "cups and his queans" had undermined his strength. Dropsy came, and gout, with worse in his bowels, and "on the top of them all, as the captain of the men of death that came to take him away," consumption. Bunyan was a true artist, though he knew nothing of the rules, and was not aware that he was an artist at all. He was not to be tempted into spoiling a natural story with the melodramatic horrors of a sinner's death-bed. He had let his victim "howl" in the usual way, when he meant him to recover. He had now simply to conduct him to the gate of the place where he was to receive the reward of his iniquities. It was enough to bring him thither still impenitent, with the grave solemnity with which a felon is taken to execution.

"As his life was full of sin," says Mr. Wiseman, "so his death was without repentance. He had not, in all the time of his sickness, a sight and a sense of his sins; but was as much at quiet as if he had never sinned in his life; he was as secure as if he had been sinless as an angel. When he drew near his end, there was no more alteration in him than what was made by his disease upon his body. He was the self-same Mr. Badman still, not only in name but in condition, and that to the very day of his death and the moment in which he died. There seemed not to be in it to the standers-by so much as a strong struggle of nature. He died like a lamb, or, as men call it, like a chrisom child, quietly and without fear."

To which end of Mr. Badman Bunyan attaches the following remarks: "If a wicked man, if a man who has lived all his days in notorious sin, dies quietly, his quiet dying is so far from being a sign of his being saved that it is an incontestable proof of his damnation. No man can be saved except he repents; nor can he repent that knows not that he is a sinner: and he that knows himself to be a sinner will, I warrant him, be molested for his knowledge before he can die quietly. I am no admirer of sick-bed repentance; for I think verily it is seldom good for anything. But I see that he that hath lived in sin and profaneness all his days, as Badman did, and yet shall die quietly—that is, without repentance steps in between his life and his death—is assuredly gone to hell. When God would show the greatness of his anger against sin and sinners in one word, He saith, Let them alone! Let them alone—that is, disturb them not. Let them go on without control. Let the devil enjoy them peaceably. Let him carry them out of the world, unconverted, quietly. This is the sorest of judgments. I do not say that all wicked men that are molested at their death with a sense of sin and fear of hell do therefore go to heaven; for some are made to see and are left to despair. But I say there is no surer sign of a man's damnation than to die quietly after a sinful life—than to sin and die with a heart that cannot repent. The opinion, therefore, of the common people of this kind of death is frivolous and vain."

So ends this very remarkable story. It is extremely interesting, merely as a picture of vulgar English life in a provincial town, such as Bedford was when Bunyan lived there. The drawing is so good, the details so minute, the conception so unexaggerated, that we are disposed to believe that we must have a real history before us. But such

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a supposition is only a compliment to the skill of the composer. Bunyan's inventive faculty was a spring that never ran dry. He had a manner, as I said, like De Foe's, of creating the allusion that we are reading realities, by little touches such as "I do not know;" "He did not tell me this;" or the needless introduction of particulars irrelevant to the general plot such as we always stumble on in life, and writers of fiction usually omit. Bunyan was never prosecuted for libel by Badman's relations, and the character is the corresponding contrast to Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the pilgrim's journey being in the opposite direction to the other place. Throughout we are on the solid earth, amidst real experiences. No demand is made on our credulity by Providential interpositions, except in the intercalated anecdotes which do not touch the story itself. The wicked man's career is not brought to the abrupt or sensational issues so much in favour with ordinary didactic tale-writers. Such issues are the exception, not the rule, and the edifying story loses its effect when the reader turns from it to actual life, and perceives that the majority are not punished in any such way. Bunyan conceals nothing, assumes nothing, and exaggerates nothing. He makes his bad man sharp and shrewd. He allows sharpness and shrewdness to bring him the rewards which such qualities in fact command. Badman is successful, he is powerful; he enjoys all the pleasures which money can buy; his bad wife helps him to ruin, but otherwise he is not unhappy, and he dies in peace. Bunyan has made him a brute, because such men do become brutes. It is the real punishment of brutal and selfish habits. There the figure stands: a picture of a man in the rank of English life with which Bunyan was most familiar, travelling along the primrose path to the everlast-

ing bonfire, as the way to Emmanuel's Land was through the Slough of Despond and the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Pleasures are to be found among the primroses, such pleasures as a brute can be gratified by. Yet the reader feels that, even if there was no bonfire, he would still prefer to be with Christian.

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CHAPTER VIII.

"THE HOLY WAR."

THE supernatural has been successfully represented in poetry, painting, or sculpture, only at particular periods of human history, and under peculiar mental conditions. The artist must himself believe in the supernatural, or his description of it will be a sham, without dignity and without credibility. He must feel himself able, at the same time, to treat the subject which he selects with freedom, throwing his own mind boldly into it, or he will produce, at best, the hard and stiff forms of literal tradition. When Benvenuto Cellini was preparing to make an image of the Virgin, he declares gravely that Our Lady appeared to him, that he might know what she was like; and so real was the apparition that, for many months after, he says that his friends, when the room was dark, could see a faint aureole about his head. Yet Benvenuto worked as if his own brain was partly the author of what he produced, and, like other contemporary artists, used his mistresses for his models, and was no servile copyist of phantoms seen in visions. There is a truth of the imagination, and there is a truth of fact, religion hovering between them, translating one into the other, turning natural phenomena into the activity of personal beings; or giving earthly names and habitations to mere creatures of fancy. Imagination

creates a mythology. The priest takes it and fashions out of it a theology, a ritual, or a sacred history. So long as the priest can convince the world that he is dealing with literal facts he holds reason prisoner, and imagination is his servant. In the twilight, when dawn is coming near but has not yet come; when the uncertain nature of the legend is felt, though not intelligently discerned—imagination is the first to resume its liberty; it takes possession of its own inheritance, it dreams of its gods and demigods, as Benevenuto dreamt of the Virgin, and it re-shapes the priest's traditions in noble and beautiful forms. Homer and the Greek dramatists would not have dared to bring the gods upon the stage so freely had they believed Zeus and Apollo were living persons, like the man in the next street, who might call the poet to account for what they were made to do and say; but neither, on the other hand, could they have been actively conscious that Zeus and Apollo were apparitions, which had no existence except in their own brains.

The condition is extremely peculiar. It can exist only in certain epochs, and in its nature is necessarily transitory. Where belief is consciously gone, the artist has no reverence for his work, and, therefore, can inspire none. The greatest genius in the world could not reproduce another Athene like that of Phidias. But neither must the belief be too complete. The poet's tongue stammers when he would bring beings before us who, though invisible, are awful personal existences, in whose stupendous presence we one day expect to stand. As long as the conviction survives that he is dealing with literal truths, he is safe only while he follows with shoeless feet the letter of the tradition. He dares not step beyond, lest he degrade the Infinite to the human level, and if he is wise he prefers to

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content himself with humbler subjects. A Christian artist can represent Jesus Christ as a man because He was a man, and because the details of the Gospel history leave room for the imagination to work. To represent Christ as the Eternal Son in heaven, to bring before us the Persons of the Trinity, consulting, planning, and reasoning, to take us into their everlasting Council-chamber, as Homer takes us into Olympus, will be possible only when Christianity ceases to be regarded as a history of true facts. Till then it is a trespass beyond the permitted limits, and revolts us by the inadequacy of the result. Either the artist fails altogether by attempting the impossible, or those whom he addresses are themselves intellectually injured by an unreal treatment of truths hitherto sacred. They confound the representation with its object, and regard the whole of it as unreal together.

These observations apply most immediately to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and are meant to explain the unsatisfactoriness of it. Milton himself was only partially emancipated from the bondage of the letter; half in earth, half "pawing to get free," like his own lion. The war in heaven, the fall of the rebel angels, the horrid splendours of Pandemonium seem legitimate subjects for Christian poetry. They stand for something which we regard as real, yet we are not bound to any actual opinions about them. Satan has no claim on reverential abstinence; and Paradise and the Fall of Man are perhaps sufficiently mythic to permit poets to take certain liberties with them. But even so far Milton has not entirely succeeded. His wars of the angels are shadowy. They have no substance, like the battles of Greeks and Trojans, or Centaurs and Lapithæ; and Satan could not be made interesting without touches of a nobler nature—that is, without ceasing to be the Satan of the

Christian religion. But this is not the worst. When we are carried up into heaven, and hear the persons of the Trinity conversing on the mischiefs which have crept into the universe, and planning remedies and schemes of salvation like Puritan divines, we turn away incredulous and resentful. Theologians may form such theories for themselves, if not wisely, yet without offence. They may study the world in which they are placed with the light which can be thrown upon it by the book which they call the Word of God. They may form their conclusions, invent their schemes of doctrine, and commend to their flocks the interpretation of the mystery at which they have arrived. The cycles and epicycles of the Ptolemaic astronomers were imperfect hypotheses, but they were stages on which the mind could rest for a more complete examination of the celestial phenomena. But the poet does not offer us phrases and formulas; he presents to us personalities, living and active, influenced by emotions and reasoning from premises; and when the unlimited and incomprehensible Being whose attributes are infinite, of whom, from the inadequacy of our ideas, we can only speak in negatives, is brought on the stage to talk like an ordinary man, we feel that Milton has mistaken the necessary limits of his art.

When Faust claims affinity with the Erdgeist, the spirit tells him to seek affinities with beings which he can comprehend. The commandment which forbade the representation of God in a bodily form, forbids the poet equally to make God describe his feelings and his purposes. Where the poet would create a character he must himself comprehend it first to its inmost fibre. He cannot comprehend his own Creator. Admire as we may *Paradise Lost*; try as we may to admire *Paradise Regained*; acknowledge

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as we must the splendour of the imagery and the stately march of the verse—there comes upon us irresistibly a sense of the unfitness of the subject for Milton's treatment of it. If the story which he tells us is true, it is too momentous to be played with in poetry. We prefer to hear it in plain prose, with a minimum of ornament and the utmost possible precision of statement. Milton himself had not arrived at thinking it to be a legend, a picture, like a Greek Mythology. His poem falls between two modes of treatment and two conceptions of truth; we wonder, we recite, we applaud, but something comes in between our minds and a full enjoyment, and it will not satisfy us better as time goes on.

The same objection applies to *The Holy War* of Bunyan. It is, as I said, a people's version of the same series of subjects—the creation of man, the fall of man, his redemption, his ingratitude, his 'apse, and again his restoration. The chief figures are the same, the action is the same, though more varied and complicated, and the general effect is unsatisfactory from the same cause. Prose is less ambitious than poetry. There is an absence of attempts at grand effects. There is no effort after sublimity, and there is consequently a lighter sense of incongruity in the failure to reach it. On the other hand, there is the greater fulness of detail so characteristic of Bunyan's manner; and fulness of detail on a theme so far beyond our understanding is as dangerous as vague grandiloquence. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* we are among genuine human beings. The reader knows the road too well which Christian follows. He has struggled with him in the Slough of Despond. He has shuddered with him in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He has groaned with him in the dungeons of Doubting Castle. He has

encountered on his journey the same fellow-travellers. Who does not know Mr. Pliable, Mr. Obstinate, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Feeble Mind, and all the rest? They are representative realities, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. "If we prick them, they bleed; if we tickle them, they laugh," or they make us laugh. "They are warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer" as we are. The human actors in *The Holy War* are parts of men—special virtues, special vices: allegories in fact as well as in name, which all Bunyan's genius can only occasionally substantiate into persons. The plot of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is simple. *The Holy War* is prolonged through endless vicissitudes, with a doubtful issue after all, and the incomprehensibility of the Being who allows Satan to defy him so long and so successfully is unpleasantly and harshly brought home to us. True, it is so in life. Evil remains after all that has been done for us. But life is confessedly a mystery. *The Holy War* professes to interpret the mystery, and only restates the problem in a more elaborate form. Man Friday, on reading it, would have asked, even more emphatically, "Why God not kill the devil?" and Robinson Crusoe would have found no assistance in answering him. For these reasons I cannot agree with Macaulay in thinking that, if there had been no *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War* would have been the first of religious allegories. We may admire the workmanship, but the same undefined sense of unreality which pursues us through Milton's epic would have interfered equally with the acceptance of this. The question to us is if the facts are true. If true, they require no allegories to touch either our hearts or our intellects.

The Holy War would have entitled Bunyan to a place among the masters of English literature. It would never

have made his name a household word in every English-speaking family on the globe.

The story, which I shall try to tell in an abridged form, is introduced by a short prefatory poem. Works of fancy, Bunyan tells us, are of many sorts, according to the author's humour. For himself he says to his reader—

"I have something else to do
Than write vain stories thus to trouble you.
What here I say some men do know too well;
They can with tears and joy the story tell.
The town of Mansoul is well known to many,
Nor are her troubles doubted of by any
That are acquainted with those histories
That Mansoul and her wars anatomize.

"Then lend thine ears to what I do relate
Touching the town of Mansoul and her state;
How she was lost, took captive, made a slave,
And how against him set that should her save,
Yea, how by hostile ways she did oppose
Her Lord, and with his enemy did close,
For they are true; he that will them deny
Must needs the best of records vilify.

"For my part, I myself was in the town
Both when 'twas set up and when pulling down.
I saw Diabolus in his possession,
And Mansoul also under his oppression:
Yea, I was there when she him owned for Lord,
And to him did submit with one accord.

"When Mansoul trampled upon things divine,
And wallowed in filth as doth a swine,
When she betook herself unto his arms,
Fought her Emmanuel, despised his charms;
Then was I there, and did rejoice to see
Diabolus and Mansoul so agree.

"Let no man count me then a fable-maker,
Nor make my name or credit a partaker
Of their derision. What is here in view
Of mine own knowledge I dare say is true."

At setting out we are introduced into the famous continent of "Universe," a large and spacious country lying between the two poles—"the people of it not all of one complexion nor yet of one language, mode or way of religion, but differing as much as the planets themselves; some right, some wrong, even as it may happen to be."

In this country of "Universe" was a fair and delicate town and corporation called "Mansoul," a town for its building so curious, for its situation so commodious, for its privileges so advantageous, that with reference to its original (state) there was not its equal under heaven. The first founder was Shaddai, who built it for his own delight. In the midst of the town was a famous and stately palace which Shaddai intended for himself.¹ He had no intention of allowing strangers to intrude there. And the peculiarity of the place was that the walls of Mansoul² could never be broken down or hurt unless the townsmen consented. Mansoul had five gates which, in like manner, could only be forced if those within allowed it. These gates were Eargate, Eyegate, Mouthgate, Nosegate, and Feelgate. Thus provided, Mansoul was at first all that its founder could desire. It had the most excellent laws in the world. There was not a rogue or a rascal inside its whole precincts. The inhabitants were all true men.

Now there was a certain giant named Diabolus—king of the blacks or negroes, as Bunyan noticeably calls them

¹ Bunyan says, in a marginal note, that by this palace he means the heart.

² The body.

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—the negroes standing for sinners or fallen angels. Diabolus had once been a servant of Shaddai, one of the chief in his territories. Pride and ambition had led him to aspire to the crown which was settled on Shaddai's Son. He had formed a conspiracy and planned a revolution. Shaddai and his Son, "being all eye," easily detected the plot. Diabolus and his crew were bound in chains, banished, and thrown into a pit, there to "abide for ever." This was their sentence; but out of the pit, in spite of it, they in some way contrived to escape. They ranged about full of malice against Shaddai, and looking for means to injure him. They came at last on Mansoul. They determined to take it, and called a council to consider how it could best be done. Diabolus was aware of the condition that no one could enter without the inhabitants' consent. Alecto, Apollyon, Beelzebub, Lucifer (Pagan and Christian demons intermixed indifferently) gave their several opinions. Diabolus at length, at Lucifer's suggestion, decided to assume the shape of one of the creatures over which Mansoul had dominion; and he selected as the fittest that of a snake, which at that time was in great favour with the people as both harmless and wise.

The population of Mansoul were simple, innocent folks who believed everything that was said to them. Force, however, might be necessary, as well as cunning, and the Tisiphone, a fury of the Lakes, was required to assist. The attempt was to be made at Eargate. A certain Captain Resistance was in charge of this gate, whom Diabolus feared more than any one in the place. Tisiphone was to shoot him.

The plans being all laid, Diabolus in his snake's dress approached the wall, accompanied by one Ill Pause, a famous orator, the Fury following behind. He asked for a

parley with the heads of the town. Captain Resistance, two of the great nobles, Lord Innocent, and Lord Will be Will, with Mr. Conscience, the Recorder, and Lord Understanding, the Lord Mayor, came to the gate to see what he wanted. Lord Will be Will plays a prominent part in the drama both for good and evil. He is neither Free Will, nor Wilfulness, nor Inclination, but the quality which metaphysicians and theologians agree in describing as "the Will." "The Will" simply—a subtle something of great importance; but what it is they have never been able to explain.

Lord Will be Will inquired Diabolus's business. Diabolus, "meek as a lamb," said he was a neighbour of theirs. He had observed with distress that they were living in a state of slavery, and he wished to help them to be free. Shaddai was no doubt a great prince, but he was an arbitrary despot. There was no liberty where the laws were unreasonable, and Shaddai's laws were the reverse of reasonable. They had a fruit growing among them, in Mansoul, which they had but to eat to become wise. Knowledge was well known to be the best of possessions. Knowledge was freedom; ignorance was bondage; and yet Shaddai had forbidden them to touch this precious fruit.

At that moment Captain Resistance fell dead, pierced by an arrow from Tisiphone. Ill Pause made a flowing speech, in the midst of which Lord Innocent fell also, either through a blow from Diabolus, or "overpowered by the stinking breath of the old villain Ill Pause." The people flew upon the apple-tree; Eargate and Eyegate were thrown open, and Diabolus was invited to come in; when at once he became King of Mansoul, and established himself in the castle.¹

¹ The heart.

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The magistrates were immediately changed. Lord Understanding ceased to be Lord Mayor. Mr. Conscience was no longer left as Recorder. Diabolus built up a wall in front of Lord Understanding's palace, and shut off the light, "so that till Mansoul was delivered the old Lord Mayor was rather an impediment than an advantage to that famous town." Diabolus tried long to bring "Conscience" over to his side, but never quite succeeded. The Recorder became greatly corrupted, but he could not be prevented from now and then remembering Shaddai; and when the fit was on him he would shake the town with his exclamations. Diabolus, therefore, had to try other methods with him. "He had a way to make the old gentleman, when he was merry, unsay and deny what in his fits he had affirmed; and this was the next way to make him ridiculous, and to cause that no man should regard him." To make all secure, Diabolus often said, "Oh, Mansoul, consider that, notwithstanding the old gentleman's rage and the rattle of the high, thundering words, you hear nothing of Shaddai himself." The Recorder had pretended that the voice of the Lord was speaking in him. Had this been so, Diabolus argued that the Lord would have done more than speak. "Shaddai," he said, "valued not the loss nor the rebellion of Mansoul, nor would he trouble himself with calling his town to a reckoning."

In this way the Recorder came to be generally hated, and more than once the people would have destroyed him. Happily his house was a castle near the water-works. When the rabble pursued him, he would pull up the sluices,¹ let in the flood, and drown all about him.

Lord Will be Will, on the other hand, "as high born as any in Mansoul," became Diabolus's principal minister.

¹ Fears.

He had been the first to propose admitting Diabolus, and he was made Captain of the Castle, Governor of the Wall, and Keeper of the Gates. Will be Will had a clerk named Mr. Mind, a man every way like his master, and Mansoul was thus brought "under the lusts" of Will and Intellect. Mr. Mind had in his house some old rent and torn parchments of the law of Shaddai. The Recorder had some more in his study; but to these Will be Will paid no attention, and surrounded himself with officials who were all in Diabolus's interest. He had as deputy one Mr. Affection, "much debauched in his principles, so that he was called Vile Affection." Vile Affection married Mr. Mind's daughter, Carnal Lust, by whom he had three sons—Impudent, Black Mouth, and Hate Reproof; and three daughters—Scorn Truth, Slight Good, and Revenge. All traces of Shaddai were now swept away. His image, which had stood in the market-place, was taken down, and an artist called Mr. No Truth was employed to set up the image of Diabolus in place of it. Lord Lustings—"who never savoured good, but evil"—was chosen for the new Lord Mayor. Mr. Forget Good was appointed Recorder. There were new burgesses and aldermen, all with appropriate names, for which Bunyan was never at a loss—Mr. Incredulity, Mr. Haughty, Mr. Swearing, Mr. Hardheart, Mr. Pitiless, Mr. Fury, Mr. No Truth, Mr. Stand to Lies, Mr. Falsepeace, Mr. Drunkenness, Mr. Cheating, Mr. Atheism, and another; thirteen of them in all. Mr. Incredulity was the eldest, Mr. Atheism the youngest in the company—a shrewd and correct arrangement. Diabolus, on his part, set to work to fortify Mansoul. He built three fortresses—"The Hold of Defiance" at Eyegate, "that the light might be darkened there;" "Midnight Hold" near the old Castle, to keep Mansoul from knowledge of itself; and

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"Sweet Sin Hold" in the market-place, that there might be no desire of good there. These strongholds being established and garrisoned, Diabolus thought that he had made his conquest secure.

So far the story runs on firmly and clearly. It is vivid, consistent in itself, and held well within the limits of human nature and experience. But, like Milton, Bunyan is now, by the exigencies of the situation, forced upon more perilous ground. He carries us into the presence of Shaddai himself, at the time when the loss of Mansoul was reported in heaven.

The king, his son, his high lords, his chief captains and nobles were all assembled to hear. There was universal grief, in which the king and his son shared, or rather seemed to share—for at once the drama of the Fall of Mankind becomes no better than a Mystery Play. "Shaddai and his son had foreseen it all long before, and had provided for the relief of Mansoul, though they told not everybody thereof—but because they would have a share in condoling of the misery of Mansoul they did, and that at the rate of the highest degree, bewail the losing of Mansoul"—"thus to show their love and compassion."

Paradise Lost was published at the time that Bunyan wrote this passage. If he had not seen it, the coincidences of treatment are singularly curious. It is equally singular, if he had seen it, that Milton should not here at least have taught him to avoid making the Almighty into a stage actor. The Father and Son consult how "to do what they had designed before." They decide that at a certain time, which they preordain, the Son, "a sweet and comely person," shall make a journey into the Universe, and lay a foundation there for Mansoul's deliverance. Milton offends in the scene less than Bunyan; but Milton cannot

persuade us that it is one which should have been represented by either of them. They should have left "plans of salvation" to eloquent orators in the pulpit.

Though the day of deliverance by the method proposed was as yet far off, the war against Diabolus was to be commenced immediately. The Lord Chief Secretary was ordered to put in writing Shaddai's intentions, and cause them to be published.¹ Mansoul, it was announced, was to be put into a better condition than it was in before Diabolus took it.

The report of the Council in Heaven was brought to Diabolus, who took his measures accordingly, Lord Will be Will standing by him and executing all his directions. Mansoul was forbidden to read Shaddai's proclamation. Diabolus imposed a great oath on the townspeople never to desert him; he believed that if they entered into a covenant of this kind Shaddai could not absolve them from it. They "swallowed the engagement as if it had been a sprat in the mouth of a whale." Being now Diabolus's trusty children, he gave them leave "to do whatever their appetites prompted to do." They would thus involve themselves in all kinds of wickedness, and Shaddai's son "being Holy" would be less likely to interest himself for them. When they had in this way put themselves, as Diabolus hoped, beyond reach of mercy, he informed them that Shaddai was raising an army to destroy the town. No quarter would be given, and unless they defended themselves like men they would all be made slaves. Their spirit being roused, he armed them with the shield of unbelief, "calling into question the truth of the Word." He gave them a helmet of hope—"hope of doing well at last, whatever lives they might lead;" for a breastplate a heart

¹ The Scriptures.

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as hard as iron, "most necessary for all that hated Shaddai;" and another piece of most excellent armour, "a drunken and prayerless spirit that scorned to cry for mercy." Shaddai, on his side, had also prepared his forces. He will not as yet send his son. The first expedition was to fail, and was meant to fail. The object was to try whether Mansoul would return to obedience. And yet Shaddai knew that it would not return to obedience. Bunyan was too ambitious to explain the inexplicable. Fifty thousand warriors were collected, all chosen by Shaddai himself. There were four leaders—Captain Boanerges, Captain Conviction, Captain Judgment, and Captain Execution—the martial saints, with whom Macaulay thinks Bunyan made acquaintance when he served, if serve he did, with Fairfax. The bearings on their banners were three black thunderbolts—the Book of the Law, wide open, with a flame of fire bursting from it; a burning, fiery furnace; and a fruitless tree with an axe at its root. These emblems represent the terrors of Mount Sinai, the covenant of works which was not to prevail.

The captains come to the walls of Mansoul, and summon the town to surrender. Their words "beat against Eargate, but without force to break it open." The new officials answer the challenge with defiance. Lord Incredulity knows not by what right Shaddai invades their country. Lord Will be Will and Mr. Forget Good warn them to be off before they rouse Diabolus. The townspeople ring the bells and dance on the walls. Will be Will double-bars the gates. Bunyan's genius is at its best in scenes of this kind. "Old Mr. Prejudice, with sixty deaf men," is appointed to take charge of Eargate. At Eargate, too, are planted two guns, called Highmind and

Heady, "cast in the earth by Diabolus's head founder, whose name was Mr. Puffup."

The fighting begins, but the covenant of works makes little progress. Shaddai's captains, when advancing on Mansoul, had fallen in with "three young fellows of promising appearance" who volunteered to go with them—"Mr. Tradition, Mr. Human Wisdom, and Mr. Man's Invention." They were allowed to join, and were placed in positions of trust, the captains of the covenant being apparently wanting in discernment. They were taken prisoners in the first skirmish, and immediately changed sides and went over to Diabolus. More battles follow. The roof of the Lord Mayor's house is beaten in. The law is not wholly ineffectual. Six of the Aldermen, the grosser moral sins—Swearing, Stand to Lies, Drunkenness, Cheating, and others—are overcome and killed. Diabolus grows uneasy, and loses his sleep. Old Conscience begins to talk again. A party forms in the town in favour of surrender, and Mr. Parley is sent to Eargate to treat for terms. The spiritual sins—False Peace, Unbelief, Haughtiness, Atheism—are still unsubdued and vigorous. The conditions offered are that Incredulity, Forget Good, and Will be Will shall retain their offices; Mansoul shall be continued in all the liberties which it enjoys under Diabolus; and a further touch is added which shows how little Bunyan sympathised with modern notions of the beauty of self-government. No new law or officer shall have any power in Mansoul without the people's consent.

Boanerges will agree to no conditions with rebels. Incredulity and Will be Will advise the people to stand by their rights, and refuse to submit to "unlimited" power. The war goes on, and Incredulity is made Diabolus's universal deputy. Conscience and Understanding, the old

Recorder and Mayor, raise a mutiny, and there is a fight in the streets. Conscience is knocked down by a Diabolonian called Mr. Benumbing. Understanding had a narrow escape from being shot. On the other hand, Mr. Mind, who had come over to the Conservative side, laid about bravely, tumbled old Mr. Prejudice into the dirt, and kicked him where he lay. Even Will be Will seemed to be wavering in his allegiance to Diabolus. "He smiled, and did not seem to take one side more than another." The rising, however, is put down—Understanding and Conscience are imprisoned, and Mansoul hardens its heart, chiefly "being in dread of slavery," and thinking liberty too fine a thing to be surrendered.

Shaddai's four captains find that they can do no more. The covenant of works will not answer. They send home a petition, "by the hand of that good man Mr. Love to Mansoul," to beg that some new general may come to lead them. The preordained time has now arrived, and Emmanuel himself is to take the command. He, too, selects his captains—Credence and Good Hope, Charity, and Innocence, and Patience; and the captains have their squires, the counterparts of themselves—Promise and Expectation, Pitiful, Harmless, and Suffer Long. Emmanuel's armour shines like the sun. He has forty-four battering-rams and twenty-two slings—the sixty-six books of the Bible—each made of pure gold. He throws up mounds and trenches, and arms them with his rams, five of the largest being planted on Mount Hearken, over against Eargate. Bunyan was too reverent to imitate the Mystery Plays, and introduce a Mount Calvary with the central sacrifice upon it. The sacrifice is supposed to have been already offered elsewhere. Emmanuel offers mercy to Mansoul, and when it is rejected he threatens judgment and terror.

Diabolus, being wiser than man, is made to know that his hour is approaching. He goes in person to Mouthgate to protest and remonstrate. He asks why Emmanuel is come to torment him. Mansoul has disowned Shaddai and sworn allegiance to himself. He begs Emmanuel to leave him to rule his own subjects in peace.

Emmanuel tells him "he is a thief and a liar." "When," Emmanuel is made to say, "Mansoul sinned by hearkening to thy lie, I put in and became a surety to my Father, body for body, soul for soul, that I would make amends for Mansoul's transgressions, and my Father did accept thereof. So, when the time appointed was come, I gave body for body, soul for soul, life for life, blood for blood, and so redeemed my beloved Mansoul. My Father's law and justice, that were both concerned in the threatening upon transgression, are both now satisfied, and very well content that Mansoul should be delivered."

Even against its deliverers, Mansoul was defended by the original condition of its constitution. There was no way into it but through the gates. Diabolus, feeling that Emmanuel still had difficulties before him, withdrew from the wall, and sent a messenger, Mr. Loth to Stoop, to offer alternative terms, to one or other of which he thought Emmanuel might consent. Emmanuel might be titular sovereign of all Mansoul, if Diabolus might keep the administration of part of it. If this could not be, Diabolus requested to be allowed to reside in Mansoul as a private person. If Emmanuel insisted on his own personal exclusion, at least he expected that his friends and kindred might continue to live there, and that he himself might now and then write them letters, and send them presents and messages, "in remembrance of the merry times they had enjoyed together." Finally, he would like

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to be consulted occasionally when any difficulties arose in Mansoul.

It will be seen that in the end Mansoul was, in fact, left liable to communications from Diabolus very much of this kind. Emmanuel's answer, however, is a peremptory No. Diabolus must take himself away, and no more must be heard of him. Seeing that there was no other resource, Diabolus resolves to fight it out. There is a great battle under the walls, with some losses on Emmanuel's side, even Captain Conviction receiving three wounds in the mouth. The shots from the gold slings mow down whole ranks of Diabolonians. Mr. Love no Good and Mr. Ill Pause are wounded. Old Prejudice and Mr. Anything run away. Lord Will be Will, who still fought for Diabolus, was never so daunted in his life: "he was hurt in the leg, and limped."

Diabolus, when the fight was over, came again to the gate with fresh proposals to Emmanuel. "I," he said, "will persuade Mansoul to receive thee for their Lord, and I know that they will do it the sooner when they understand that I am thy deputy. I will show them wherein they have erred, and that transgression stands in the way to life. I will show them the Holy Law to which they must conform, even that which they have broken. I will press upon them the necessity of a reformation according to thy law. At my own cost I will set up and maintain a sufficient ministry, besides lecturers, in Mansoul!" This obviously means the Established Church. Unable to keep mankind directly in his own service, the devil offers to entangle them in the covenant of works, of which the Church of England was the representative. Emmanuel rebukes him for his guile and deceit. "I will govern Mansoul," he says, "by new laws, new officers, new mo-

tives, and new ways. I will pull down the town and build it again, and it shall be as though it had not been, and it shall be the glory of the whole universe."

A second battle follows. Eargate is beaten in. The Prince's army enters and advances as far as the old Recorder's house, where they knock and demand entrance. "The old gentleman, not fully knowing their design, had kept his gates shut all the time of the fight. He as yet knew nothing of the great designs of Emmanuel, and could not tell what to think." The door is violently broken open, and the house is made Emmanuel's headquarters. The townspeople, with Conscience and Understanding at their head, petition that their lives may be spared; but Emmanuel gives no answer, Captain Boanerges and Captain Conviction carrying terror into all hearts. Disbolus, the cause of all the mischief, had retreated into the castle.¹ He came out at last, and surrendered, and in dramatic fitness he clearly ought now to have been made away with in a complete manner. Unfortunately, this could not be done. He was stripped of his armour, bound to Emmanuel's chariot-wheels, and thus turned out of Mansoul "into parched places in a salt land, where he might seek rest and find none." The salt land proved as insecure a prison for this embarrassing being as the pit where he was to have abode forever.

Meanwhile, Mansoul being brought upon its knees, the inhabitants were summoned into the castle-yard, when Conscience, Understanding, and Will be Will were committed to ward. They and the rest again prayed for mercy, but again without effect. Emmanuel was silent. They drew another petition, and asked Captain Conviction to present it for them. Captain Conviction declined to

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be an advocate for rebels, and advised them to send it by one of themselves, with a rope about his neck. Mr. Desires Awake went with it. The Prince took it from his hands, and wept as Desires Awake gave it in. Emmanuel bade him go his way till the request could be considered. The unhappy criminals knew not how to take the answer. Mr. Understanding thought it promised well. Conscience and Will be Will, borne down by shame for their sins, looked for nothing but immediate death. They tried again. They threw themselves on Emmanuel's mercy. They drew up a confession of their horrible iniquities. This, at least, they wished to offer to him whether he would pity them or not. For a messenger some of them thought of choosing one Old Good Deed. Conscience, however, said that would never do. Emmanuel would answer, "Is Old Good Deed yet alive in Mansoul? Then let Old Good Deed save it." Desires Awake went again with the rope on his neck, as Captain Conviction recommended. Mr. Wet Eyes went with him, wringing his hands.

Emmanuel still held out no comfort; he promised merely that in the camp the next morning he would give such an answer as should be to his glory. Nothing but the worst was now looked for. Mansoul passed the night in sackcloth and ashes. When day broke, the prisoners dressed themselves in mourning, and were carried to the camp in chains, with ropes on their necks, beating their breasts. Prostrate before Emmanuel's throne, they repeated their confession. They acknowledged that death and the bottomless pit would be no more than a just retribution for their crimes. As they excused nothing and promised nothing, Emmanuel at once delivered them their pardons sealed with seven seals. He took off their ropes

and mourning, clothed them in shining garments, and gave them chains and jewels.

Lord Will be Will "swooned outright." When he recovered, "the Prince" embraced and kissed him. The bells in Mansoul were set ringing. Bonfires blazed. Emmanuel reviewed his army; and Mansoul, ravished at the sight, prayed him to remain and be their King for ever. He entered the city again in triumph, the people strewing boughs and flowers before him. The streets and squares were rebuilt on a new model. Lord Will be Will, now regenerate, resumed the charge of the gates. The old Lord Mayor was reinstated. Mr. Knowledge was made Recorder, "not out of contempt for old Conscience, who was by-and-bye to have another employment." Diabolus's image was taken down and broken to pieces, and the inhabitants of Mansoul were so happy that they sang of Emmanuel in their sleep.

Justice, however, remained to be done on the hardened and impenitent.

There were "perhaps necessities in the nature of things," as Bishop Butler says, and an example could not be made of the principal offender. But his servants and old officials were lurking in the lanes and alleys. They were apprehended, thrown into gaol, and brought to formal trial. Here we have Bunyan at his best. The scene in the court rises to the level of the famous trial of Faithful in Vanity Fair. The prisoners were Diabolus's Aldermen—Mr. Atheism, Mr. Incredulity, Mr. Lustings, Mr. Forget Good, Mr. Hardheart, Mr. Falsepeace, and the rest. The proceedings were precisely what Bunyan must have witnessed at a common English Assizes. The Judges were the new Recorder and the new Mayor. Mr. Do-right was Town Clerk. A jury was empanelled in the usual way.

Mr. Knowall, Mr. Telltrue, and Mr. Hatelies were the principal witnesses.

Atheism was first brought to the bar, being charged "with having pertinaciously and doltingly taught that there was no God." He pleaded Not Guilty. Mr. Knowall was placed in the witness-box and sworn.

"My Lord," he said, "I know the prisoner at the bar. I and he were once in Villains' Lane together, and he at that time did briskly talk of diverse opinions. And then and there I heard him say that for his part he did believe that there was no God. 'But,' said he, 'I can profess one and be religious too, if the company I am in and the circumstances of other things,' said he, 'shall put me upon it.'"

Telltrue and Hatelies were next called.

"*Telltrue.* My Lord, I was formerly a great companion of the prisoner's, for the which I now repent me; and I have often heard him say, and with very great stomach-fulness, that he believed there was neither God, Angel, nor Spirit.

"*Town Clerk.* Where did you hear him say so?

"*Telltrue.* In Blackmouth Lane and in Blasphemers' Row, and in many other places besides.

"*Town Clerk.* Have you much knowledge of him?

"*Telltrue.* I know him to be a Diabolonian, the son of a Diabolonian, and a horrible man to deny a Deity. His father's name was Never be Good, and he had more children than this Atheism.

"*Town Clerk.* Mr. Hatelies. Look upon the prisoner at the bar. Do you know him.

"*Hatelies.* My Lord, this Atheism is one of the vilest wretches that ever I came near or had to do with in my life. I have heard him say that there is no God. I have heard him say that there is no world to come, no sin, nor punishment hereafter; and, moreover, I have heard him say that it was as good to go to a bad-house as to go to hear a sermon.

"*Town Clerk.* Where did you hear him say these things?

"*Hatelies.* In Drunkards' Row, just at Rascal Lane's End, at a house in which Mr. Impiety lived."

The next prisoner was Mr. Lustings, who said that he was of high birth, and "used to pleasures and pastimes of greatness." He had always been allowed to follow his own inclinations, and it seemed strange to him that he should be called in question for things which not only he but every man secretly or openly approved.

When the evidence had been heard against him he admitted frankly its general correctness.

"I," he said, "was ever of opinion that the happiest life that a man could live on earth was to keep himself back from nothing that he desired; nor have I been false at any time to this opinion of mine, but have lived in the love of my notions all my days. Nor was I ever so churlish, having found such sweetness in them myself, as to keep the commendation of them from others."

Then came Mr. Incredulity. He was charged with having encouraged the town of Mansoul to resist Shaddai. Incredulity, too, had the courage of his opinions.

"I know not Shaddai," he said. "I love my old Prince. I thought it my duty to be true to my trust, and to do what I could to possess the minds of the men of Mansoul to do their utmost to resist strangers and foreigners, and with might to fight against them. Nor have I nor shall I change my opinion for fear of trouble, though you at present are possessed of place and power."

Forget Good pleaded age and craziness. He was the son of a Diabolonian called Love Naught. He had uttered blasphemous speeches in Allbase Lane, next door to the sign of "Conscience Seared with a Hot Iron;" also in Flesh Lane, right opposite the Church; also in Nauseous Street; also at the sign of the "Reprobate," next door to the "Descent into the Pit."

Falsepeace insisted that he was wrongly named in the

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indictment. His real name was Peace, and he had always laboured for peace. When war broke out between Shaddai and Diabolus, he had endeavoured to reconcile them, &c. Evidence was given that Falsepeace was his right designation. His father's name was Flatter. His mother, before she married Flatter, was called Mrs. Sootheup. When her child was born she always spoke of him as Falsepeace. She would call him twenty times a day, my little Falsepeace, my pretty Falsepeace, my sweet rogue Falsepeace! &c.

The court rejected his plea. He was told "that he had wickedly maintained the town of Mansoul in rebellion against its king, in a false, lying, and damnable peace, contrary to the law of Shaddai. Peace that was not a companion of truth and holiness, was an accused and treacherous peace, and was grounded on a lie.

No Truth had assisted with his own hands in pulling down the image of Shaddai. He had set up the horned image of the beast Diabolus at the same place, and had torn and consumed all that remained of the laws of the king.

Pitiless said his name was not Pitiless, but Cheer Up. He disliked to see Mansoul inclined to melancholy, and that was all his offence. Pitiless, however, was proved to be the name of him. It was a habit of the Diabolonians to assume counterfeit appellations. Covetousness called himself Good Husbandry; Pride called himself Handsome; and so on.

Mr. Haughty's figure is admirably drawn in a few lines. Mr. Haughty, when arraigned, declared "that he had carried himself bravely, not considering who was his foe, or what was the cause in which he was engaged. It was enough for him if he fought like a man and came off victorious."

The jury, it seems, made no distinctions between opinions and acts. They did not hold that there was any divine right in man to think what he pleased, and to say what he thought. Bunyan had suffered as a martyr; but it was as a martyr for truth, not for general licence. The genuine Protestants never denied that it was right to prohibit men from teaching lies, and to punish them if they disobeyed. The persecution of which they complained was the persecution of the honest man by the knave.

All the prisoners were found guilty by a unanimous verdict. Even Mr. Moderate, who was one of the jury, thought a man must be wilfully blind who wished to spare them. They were sentenced to be executed the next day. Incredulity contrived to escape in the night. Search was made for him, but he was not to be found in Mansoul. He had fled beyond the walls, and had joined Diabolus near Hell Gate. The rest, we are told, were crucified—crucified by the hands of the men of Mansoul themselves. They fought and struggled at the place of execution so violently that Shaddai's secretary was obliged to send assistance. But justice was done at last, and all the Diabolonians, except Incredulity, were thus made an end of.

They were made an end of for a time only. Mansoul, by faith in Christ, and by the help of the Holy Spirit, had crucified all manner of sin in its members. It was faith that had now the victory. Unbelief had, unfortunately, escaped. It had left Mansoul for the time, and had gone to its master the devil. But unbelief, being intellectual, had not been crucified with the sins of the flesh, and thus could come back, and undo the work which faith had accomplished. I do not know how far this view approves itself to the more curious theologians. Unbelief itself is

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said to be a product of the will; but an allegory must not be cross-questioned too minutely.

The cornucopia of spiritual blessings was now opened on Mansoul. All offences were fully and completely forgiven. A Holy Law and Testament was bestowed on the people for their comfort and consolation, with a portion of the grace which dwelt in the hearts of Shaddai and Emmanuel themselves. They were to be allowed free access to Emmanuel's palace at all seasons, he himself undertaking to hear them and redress their grievances, and they were empowered and enjoined to destroy all Diabolonians who might be found at any time within their precincts.

These grants were embodied in a charter which was set up in gold letters on the castle door. Two ministers were appointed to carry on the government—one from Shaddai's court; the other a native of Mansoul. The first was Shaddai's Chief Secretary, the Holy Spirit. He, if they were obedient and well-conducted, would be "ten times better to them than the whole world." But they were cautioned to be careful of their behaviour, for if they grieved him he would turn against them, and the worst might then be looked for. The second minister was the old Recorder, Mr. Conscience, for whom, as was said, a new office had been provided. The address of Emmanuel to Conscience, in handing his commission to him, contains the essence of Bunyan's creed:

"Thou must confine thyself to the teaching of moral virtues, to civil and natural duties. But thou must not attempt to presume to be a revealer of those high and supernatural mysteries that are kept close in the bosom of Shaddai, my father. For those things knows no man; nor can any reveal them but my father's secretary only. . . .

In all high and supernatural things thou must go to him for information and knowledge. Wherefore keep low and be humble; and remember that the Diabolonians that kept not their first charge, but left their own standing, are now made prisoners in the pit. Be therefore content with thy station. I have made thee my father's vicerent on earth in the things of which I have made mention before. Take thou power to teach them to Mansoul; yea, to impose them with whips and chastisements if they shall not willingly hear a to do thy commandments. . . . And one thing more to my beloved Mr. Recorder, and to all the town of Mansoul. You must not dwell in nor stay upon anything of that which he hath in commission to teach you, as to your trust and expectation of the next world. Of the next world, I say; for I purpose to give another to Mansoul when this is worn out. But for that you must wholly and solely have recourse to and make stay upon the doctrine of your teacher of the first order. Yea, Mr. Recorder himself must not look for life from that which he himself revealeth. His dependence for that must be founded in the doctrine of the other preacher. Let Mr. Recorder also take heed that he receive not any doctrine or points of doctrine that are not communicated to him by his superior teacher, nor yet within the precincts of his own formal knowledge."

Here, as a work of art, *The Holy War* should have its natural end. Mansoul had been created pure and happy. The devil plotted against it, took it, defiled it. The Lord of the town came to the rescue, drove the devil out, executed his officers and destroyed his works. Mansoul, according to Emmanuel's promise, was put into a better condition than that in which it was originally placed. New laws were drawn for it. New ministers were ap-

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pointed to execute them. Vice had been destroyed. Unbelief had been driven away. The future lay serene and bright before it; all trials and dangers being safely passed. Thus we have all the parts of a complete drama—the fair beginning, the perils, the struggles, and the final victory of good. At this point, for purposes of art, the curtain ought to fall.

For purposes of art—not, however, for purposes of truth; for the drama of Mansoul was still incomplete, and will remain incomplete till man puts on another nature or ceases altogether to be. Christianity might place him in a new relation to his Maker, and, according to Bunyan, might expel the devil out of his heart. But for practical purposes, as Mansoul too well knows, the devil is still in possession. At intervals—as in the first centuries of the Christian era, for a period in the middle ages, and again in Protestant countries for another period at the Reformation—mankind made noble efforts to drive him out, and make the law of God into reality. But he comes back again, and the world is again as it was. The vices again flourish which had been nailed to the Cross. The statesman finds it as little possible as ever to take moral right and justice for his rule in politics. The Evangelical preacher continues to confess and deplore the desperate wickedness of the human heart. The devil had been deposed, but his faithful subjects have restored him to his throne. The stone of Sisyphus has been brought to the brow of the hill only to rebound again to the bottom. The old battle has to be fought a second time, and, for all we can see, no closing victory will ever be in "this country of Universe." Bunyan knew this but too well. He tries to conceal it from himself by treating Mansoul alternately as the soul of a single individual from which

the devil may be so expelled as never dangerously to come back, or as the collective souls of the Christian world. But, let him mean which of the two he will, the overpowering fact remains that, from the point of view of his own theology, the great majority of mankind are the devil's servants through life, and are made over to him everlastingly when their lives are over; while the human race itself continues to follow its idle amusements and its sinful pleasures as if no Emmanuel had ever come from heaven to rescue it. Thus the situation is incomplete, and the artistic treatment necessarily unsatisfactory—nay, in a sense even worse than unsatisfactory—for the attention of the reader, being reawakened by the fresh and lively treatment of the subject, refuses to be satisfied with conventional explanatory commonplaces. His mind is puzzled; his faith wavers in its dependence upon a Being who can permit His work to be spoilt, His power defied, His victories even, when won, made useless.

Thus we take up the continuation of *The Holy War* with a certain weariness and expectation of disappointment. The delivery of Mansoul has not been finished after all, and, for all that we can see, the struggle between Shaddai and Diabolus may go on to eternity. Emmanuel, before he withdraws his presence, warns the inhabitants that many Diabolonians are still lurking about the outside walls of the town.¹ The names are those in St. Paul's list—Fornication, Adultery, Murder, Anger, Lasciviousness, Deceit, Evil Eye, Drunkenness, Revelling, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Sedition, Heresy. If all these were still abroad, not much had been gained by the crucifixion of the Aldermen. For the time, it was

¹ The Flesh.

true, they did not show themselves openly. Mansoul after the conquest was clothed in white linen, and was in a state of peace and glory. But the linen was speedily soiled again. Mr. Carnal Security became a great person in Mansoul. The Chief Secretary's functions fell early into abeyance. He discovered the Recorder and Lord Will be Will at dinner in Mr. Carnal Security's parlour, and ceased to communicate with them. Mr. Godly Fear sounded an alarm, and Mr. Carnal Security's house was burnt by the mob; but Mansoul's backslidings grew worse. It had its fits of repentance, and petitioned Emmanuel, but the messenger could have no admittance. The Lusts of the Flesh came out of their dens. They held a meeting in the room of Mr. Mischief, and wrote to invite Diabolus to return. Mr. Profane carried their letter to Hell Gate. Cerberus opened it, and a cry of joy ran through the prison. Beelzebub, Lucifer, Apollyon, and the rest of the devils came crowding to hear the news. Deadman's bell was rung. Diabolus addressed the assembly, putting them in hopes of recovering their prize. "Nor need you fear, he said, that if ever we get Mansoul again, we after that shall be cast out any more. It is the law of that Prince that now they own, that if we get them a second time they shall be ours forever." He returned a warm answer to his friend, "which was subscribed as given at the Pit's mouth, by the joint consent of all the Princes of Darkness, by me, Diabolus." The plan was to corrupt Mansoul's morals, and three devils of rank set off disguised to take service in the town, and make their way into the households of Mr. Mind, Mr. Godly Fear, and Lord Will be Will. Godly Fear discovered his mistake, and turned the devil out. The other two established themselves successfully, and Mr. Profane was soon at Hell Gate again to report progress.

Cerberus welcomed him with a "St. Mary, I am glad to see thee." Another council was held in Pandemonium, and Diabolus was impatient to show himself again on the scene. Apollyon advised him not to be in a hurry. "Let our friends," he said, "draw Mansoul more and more into sin—there is nothing like sin to devour Mansoul;" but Diabolus would not wait for so slow a process, and raised an army of Doubters "from the land of Doubting, on the confines of Hell Gate Hill." "Doubt," Bunyan always admitted, had been his own most dangerous enemy.

Happily the towns-people became aware of the peril which threatened them. Mr. Prywell, a great lover of Mansoul, overheard some Diabolonians talking about it at a place called Vile Hill. He carried his information to the Lord Mayor; the Recorder rang the Alarm Bell; Mansoul flew to penitence, held a day of fasting and humiliation, and prayed to Shaddai. The Diabolonians were hunted out, and all that could be found were killed. So far as haste and alarm would permit, Mansoul mended its ways. But on came the Doubting army, led by Incredulity, who had escaped crucifixion—"none was truer to Diabolus than he"—on they came under their several captains, Vocation Doubters, Grace Doubters, Salvation Doubters, &c.; figures now gone to shadow; then the deadliest foes of every English Puritan soul. Mansoul appealed passionately to the Chief Secretary; but the Chief Secretary "had been grieved," and would have nothing to say to it. The town legions went out to meet the invaders with good words, Prayer, and singing of Psalms. The Doubters replied with "horrible objections," which were frightfully effective. Lord Reason was wounded in the head, and the Lord Mayor in the eye; Mr. Mind received a shot in the stomach, and Conscience was hit near the

heart; but the wounds were not mortal. Mansoul had the best of it in the first engagement. Terror was followed by boasting and self-confidence; a night sally was attempted—night being the time when the Doubters were strongest. The sally failed, and the men of Mansoul were turned to rout. Diabolus's army attacked Eargate, stormed the walls, forced their way into the town, and captured the whole of it except the castle. Then "Mansoul became a den of dragons, an emblem of Hell, a place of total darkness." "Mr. Conscience's wounds so festered that he could have no rest day or night." "Now a man might have walked for days together in Mansoul, and scarce have seen one in the town that looked like a religious man. Oh, the fearful state of Mansoul now!" "Now every corner swarmed with outlandish Doubters; Red Coats and Black Coats walked the town by clusters, and filled the houses with hideous noises, lying stories, and blasphemous language against Shaddai and his Son."

This is evidently meant for fashionable London in the time of Charles II. Bunyan was loyal to the King. He was no believer in moral regeneration through political revolution. But none the less he could see what was under his eyes, and he knew what to think of it.

All was not lost, for the castle still held out. The only hope was in Emmanuel, and the garrison proposed to petition again in spite of the ill-reception of their first messengers. Godly Fear reminded them that no petition would be received which was not signed by the Lord Secretary, and that the Lord Secretary would sign nothing which he had not himself drawn up. The Lord Secretary, when appealed to in the proper manner, no longer refused his assistance. Captain Credence flew up to Shaddai's court with the simple words that Mansoul renounced all

trust in its own strength and relied upon its Saviour. This time its prayer would be heard.

The devils, meanwhile, triumphant though they were, discovered that they could have no permanent victory unless they could reduce the castle. "Doubters at a distance," Beelzebub said, "are but like objections repelled by arguments. Can we but get them into the hold, and make them possessors of that, the day will be our own." The object was, therefore, to corrupt Mansoul at the heart.

Then follows a very curious passage. Bunyan had still his eye on England, and had discerned the quarter from which her real danger would approach. Mansoul, the devil perceived, "was a market-town, much given to commerce." "It would be possible to dispose of some of the devil's wares there." The people would be filled full, and made rich, and would forget Emmanuel. "Mansoul," they said, "shall be so cumbered with abundance that they shall be forced to make their castle a warehouse." Wealth once made the first object of existence, "Diabolus's gang will have easy entrance, and the castle will be our own."

Political economy was still sleeping in the womb of futurity. Diabolus was unable to hasten its birth, and an experiment which Bunyan thought would certainly have succeeded was not to be tried. The *Deus ex Machina* appeared with its flaming sword. The Doubting army was cut to pieces, and Mansoul was saved. Again, however, the work was imperfectly done. Diabolus, like the bad genius in the fairy tale, survived for fresh mischief. Diabolus flew off again to Hell Gate, and was soon at the head of a new host; part composed of fugitive Doubters whom he rallied, and part of a new set of enemies called *Blood-men*, by whom we are to understand persecutors, "a people from a land that lay under the Dog Star." "Captain

Pope" was chief of the Bloodmen. His escutcheon "was the stake, the flame, and good men in it." The Bloodmen had done Diabolus wonderful service in time past. "Once they had forced Emmanuel out of the Kingdom of the Universe, and why, thought he, might they not do it again?"

Emmanuel did not this time go in person to the encounter. It was enough to send his captains. The Doubters fled at the first onset. "The Bloodmen, when they saw that no Emmanuel was in the field, concluded that no Emmanuel was in Mansoul. Wherefore, they, looking upon what the captains did to be, as they called it, a fruit of the extravagancy of their wild and foolish fancies, rather despised them than feared them." "They proved, nevertheless, chicken-hearted, when they saw themselves matched and equalled." The chiefs were taken prisoners, and brought to trial like Atheism and his companions, and so, with an address from the Prince, the story comes to a close.

Thus at last *The Holy War* ends, or seems to end. It is as if Bunyan had wished to show that though the converted Christian was still liable to the assaults of Satan, and even to be beaten down and overcome by him, his state was never afterwards so desperate as it had been before the redemption, and that he had assistance ready at hand to save him when near extremity. But the reader whose desire it is that good shall triumph, and evil be put to shame and overthrown, remains but partially satisfied; and the last conflict and its issues leave Mansoul still subject to fresh attacks. Diabolus was still at large. Carnal Sense broke prison, and continued to lurk in the town. Unbelief "was a nimble Jack: him they could never lay hold of, though they attempted to do it often." Unbelief remained in Mansoul till the time that Mansoul ceased to

dwell in the country of the Universe; and where Unbelief was, Diabolus would not be without a friend to open the gates to him. Bunyan says, indeed, that "he was stoned as often as he showed himself in the streets." He shows himself in the streets much at his ease in these days of ours after two more centuries.

Here lies the real weakness of *The Holy War*. It may be looked at either as the war in the soul of each sinner that is saved, or as the war for the deliverance of humanity. Under the first aspect it leaves out of sight the large majority of mankind who are not supposed to be saved, and out of whom, therefore, Diabolus is not driven at all. Under the other aspect the struggle is still unfinished; the last act of the drama has still to be played, and we know not what the conclusion is to be.

To attempt to represent it, therefore, as a work of art, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, is necessarily a failure. The mysteries and contradictions which the Christian revelation leaves unsolved are made tolerable to us by Hope. We are prepared to find in religion many things which we cannot understand; and difficulties do not perplex us so long as they remain in a form to which we are accustomed. To emphasise the problem by offering it to us in an allegory, of which we are presumed to possess a key, serves only to revive Man Friday's questio , or the old dilemma which neither intellect nor imagination has ever dealt with successfully. "Deus aut non vult tollere mala, aut nequit. Si non vult non est bonus. Si nequit non est omnipotens." It is wiser to confess with Butler that "there may be necessities in the nature of things which we are not acquainted with."

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CHAPTER IX.

"THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

If *The Holy War* is an unfit subject for allegorical treatment, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is no less perfectly adapted for it. *The Holy War* is a representation of the struggle of human nature with evil, and the struggle is left undecided. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a representation of the efforts of a single soul after holiness, which has its natural termination when the soul quits its mortal home and crosses the dark river. Each one of us has his own life-battle to fight out, his own sorrows and trials, his own failures or successes, and his own end. He wins the game, or he loses it. The account is wound up, and the curtain falls upon him. Here Bunyan had a material as excellent in itself as it was exactly suited to his peculiar genius; and his treatment of the subject from his own point of view—that of English Protestant Christianity—is unequalled, and never will be equalled. I may say never, for in this world of change the point of view alters fast, and never continues in one stay. As we are swept along the stream of time, lights and shadows shift their places, mountain plateaus turn to sharp peaks, mountain ranges dissolve into vapour. The river which has been gliding deep and slow along the plain, leaps suddenly over a precipice and plunges foaming down a sunless gorge.

In the midst of changing circumstances the central question remains the same—What am I? what is this world, in which I appear and disappear like a bubble? who made me? and what am I to do? Some answer or other the mind of man demands and insists on receiving. Theologian or poet offers, at long intervals, explanations which are accepted as credible for a time. They wear out, and another follows, and then another. Bunyan's answer has served average English men and women for two hundred years, but no human being with Bunyan's intellect and Bunyan's sincerity can again use similar language; and *The Pilgrim's Progress* is and will remain unique of its kind—an imperishable monument of the form in which the problem presented itself to a person of singular truthfulness, simplicity, and piety, who, after many struggles, accepted the Puritan creed as the adequate solution of it. It was composed exactly at the time when it was possible for such a book to come into being—the close of the period when the Puritan formula was a real belief, and was about to change from a living principle into an intellectual opinion. So long as a religion is fully alive, men do not talk about it or make allegories about it. They assume its truth as out of reach of question, and they simply obey its precepts as they obey the law of the land. It becomes a subject of art and discourse only when men are unconsciously ceasing to believe, and therefore the more vehemently think that they believe, and repudiate with indignation the suggestion that doubt has found its way into them. After this, religion no longer governs their lives. It governs only the language in which they express themselves, and they preserve it eagerly, in the shape of elaborate observances or in the agreeable forms of art and literature.

The Pilgrim's Progress was written before *The Holy War*, while Bunyan was still in prison at Bedford, and was but half conscious of the gifts which he possessed. It was written for his own entertainment, and therefore without the thought—so fatal in its effects and so hard to be resisted—of what the world would say about it. It was written in compulsory quiet, when he was comparatively unexcited by the effort of perpetual preaching, and the shapes of things could present themselves to him as they really were, undistorted by theological narrowness. It is the same story which he has told of himself in *Grace Abounding*, thrown out into an objective form.

He tells us himself, in a metrical introduction, the circumstances under which it was composed:—

"When at the first I took my pen in hand,
Thus for to write, I did not understand
That I at all should make a little book
In such a mode. Nay, I had undertook
To make another, which when almost done,
Before I was aware I this begun.

"And thus it was: I writing of the way
And race of saints in this our Gospel day,
Fell suddenly into an Allegory
About the journey and the way to glory
In more than twenty things which I set down;
This done, I twenty more had in my crown,
And these again began to multiply,
Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly.
Nay then, thought I, if that you breed so fast,
I'll put you by yourselves, lest you at last
Should prove *ad Infinitum*, and eat out
The book that I already am about.

"Well, so I did; but yet I did not think
To show to all the world my pen and ink

In such a mode. I only thought to make,
 I knew not what. Nor did I undertake
 Merely to please my neighbours; no, not I.
 I did it mine own self to gratify.

"Neither did I but vacant seasons spend
 In this my scribble; nor did I intend
 But to divert myself in doing this
 From worser thoughts which make me do amiss.
 Thus I set pen to paper with delight,
 And quickly had my thoughts in black and white;
 For having now my method by the end,
 Still as I pulled it came; and so I penned
 It down: until at last it came to be
 For length and breadth the bigness which you see.

"Well, when I had thus put my ends together,
 I showed them others, that I might see whether
 They would condemn them or them justify.
 And some said, Let them live; some, Let them die;
 Some said, John, print it; others said, Not so;
 Some said it might do good; others said, No.

"Now was I in a strait, and did not see
 Which was the best thing to be done by me.
 At last I thought, since you are thus divided,
 I print it will; and so the case decided."

The difference of opinion among Bunyan's friends is easily explicable. The allegoric representation of religion to men profoundly convinced of the truth of it might naturally seem light and fantastic, and the breadth of the conception could not please the narrow sectarians who knew no salvation beyond the lines of their peculiar formulæ. The Pilgrim, though in a Puritan dress, is a genuine man. His experience is so truly human experience, that Christians of every persuasion can identify themselves with him; and even those who regard Chris-

tianity itself as but a natural outgrowth of the conscience and intellect, and yet desire to live nobly and make the best of themselves, can recognise familiar footprints in every step of Christian's journey. Thus *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a book which, when once read, can never be forgotten. We too, every one of us, are pilgrims on the same road, and images and illustrations come back upon us from so faithful an itinerary, as we encounter similar trials, and learn for ourselves the accuracy with which Bunyan has described them. There is no occasion to follow a story minutely which memory can so universally supply. I need pause only at a few spots which are too charming to pass by.

How picturesque and vivid are the opening lines:

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world I lighted on a certain place where there was a den,¹ and I laid me down in that place to sleep, and as I slept I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man, a man clothed in rags, standing with his face from his own home with a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back."

The man is Bunyan himself as we see him in *Grace Abounding*. His sins are the burden upon his back. He reads his book and weeps and trembles. He speaks of his fears to his friends and kindred. They think "some frenzy distemper has got into his head." He meets a man in the fields whose name is Evangelist. Evangelist tells him to flee from the City of Destruction. He shows him the way by which he must go, and points to the far-off light which will guide him to the wicket-gate. He sets off, and his neighbours of course think him mad. The world always thinks men mad who turn their backs upon

¹ The Bedford Prison.

it. Obstinate and Pliable (how well we know them both!) follow to persuade him to return. Obstinate talks practical common sense to him, and, as it has no effect, gives him up as a fantastical fellow. Pliable thinks that there may be something in what he says, and offers to go with him.

Before they can reach the wicket-gate they fall into a "miry slough." Who does not know the miry slough too? When a man begins for the first time to think seriously about himself, the first thing that rises before him is a consciousness of his miserable past life. Amendment seems to be desperate. He thinks it is too late to change for any useful purpose, and he sinks into despondency.

Pliable, finding the road disagreeable, has soon had enough of it. He scrambles out of the slough "on the side which was nearest to his own house" and goes home. Christian, struggling manfully, is lifted out "by a man whose name was Help," and goes on upon his journey, but the burden on his back weighs him down. He falls in with Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who lives in the town of Carnal Policy. Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who looks like a gentleman, advises him not to think about his sins. If he has done wrong he must alter his life and do better for the future. He directs him to a village called Morality, where he will find a gentleman well known in those parts, who will take his burden off—Mr. Legality. Either Mr. Legality will do it himself, or it can be done equally well by his pretty young son, Mr. Civility.

The way to a better life does not lie in a change of outward action, but in a changed heart. Legality soon passes into civility, according to the saying that vice loses half its evil when it loses its grossness. Bunyan would have said that the poison was the more deadly from being con-

sealed. Christian, after a near escape, is set straight again. He is admitted into the wicket-gate, and is directed how he is to go forward. He asks if he may not lose his way. He is answered Yes, "There are many ways (that) butt down on this, and they are crooked and wide. But thus thou mayest know the right from the wrong, that only being straight and narrow."

Good people often suppose that when a man is once "converted," as they call it, and has entered on a religious life, he will find everything made easy. He has turned to Christ, and in Christ he will find rest and pleasantness. The path of duty is unfortunately not strewed with flowers at all. The primrose road leads to the other place. As on all other journeys, to persevere is the difficulty. The pilgrim's feet grow sorer the longer he walks. His lower nature follows him like a shadow, watching opportunities to trip him up, and ever appearing in some new disguise. In the way of comfort he is allowed only certain resting-places, quiet intervals of peace when temptation is absent, and the mind can gather strength and encouragement from a sense of the progress which it has made.

The first of these resting-places at which Christian arrives is the "Interpreter's House." This means, I conceive, that he arrives at a right understanding of the objects of human desire as they really are. He learns to distinguish there between passion and patience, passion which demands immediate gratification, and patience which can wait and hope. He sees the action of grace on the heart, and sees the devil labouring to put it out. He sees the man in the iron cage who was once a flourishing professor, but had been tempted away by pleasure and had sinned against light. He hears a dream too—one of Bunyan's

own early dreams, but related as by another person. The Pilgrim himself was beyond the reach of such uneasy visions. But it shows how profoundly the terrible side of Christianity had seized on Bunyan's imagination, and how little he was able to forget it.

"This night as I was in my sleep I dreamed, and behold the heavens grew exceeding black; also it thundered and lightened in most fearful wise, that it put me into an agony; so I looked up in my dream and saw the clouds rack at an unusual rate, upon which I heard a great sound of a trumpet, and saw also a man sit upon a cloud attended with the thousands of heaven. They were all in a flaming fire, and the heaven also was in a burning flame. I heard then a voice, saying, Arise ye dead and come to judgment; and with that the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the dead that were therein came forth. Some of them were exceeding glad and looked upward; some sought to hide themselves under the mountains. Then I saw the man that sate upon the cloud open the book and bid the world draw near. Yet there was, by reason of a fierce flame that issued out and came from before him, a convenient distance betwixt him and them, as betwixt the judge and the prisoners at the bar. I heard it also proclaimed to them that attended on the man that sate on the cloud, Gather together the tares, the chaff, and the stubble, and cast them into the burning lake. And with that the bottomless pit opened just whereabouts I stood, out of the mouth of which there came in an abundant manner smoke and coals of fire with hideous noises. It was also said to the same persons, Gather the wheat into my garner. And with that I saw many caught up and carried away into the clouds, but I was left behind. I also sought to hide myself, but I could not, for the man that sate upon the

cloud still kept his eye upon me. My sins also came into my mind, and my conscience did accuse me on every side. I thought the day of judgment was come, and I was not ready for it."

The resting-time comes to an end. The Pilgrim gathers himself together, and proceeds upon his way. He is not to be burdened for ever with the sense of his sins. It fell from off his back at the sight of the cross. Three shining ones appear and tell him that his sins are forgiven; they take off his rags and provide him with a new suit.

He now encounters fellow-travellers; and the seriousness of the story is relieved by adventures and humorous conversations. At the bottom of a hill he finds three gentlemen asleep, "a little out of the way." These were Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. He tries to rouse them, but does not succeed. Presently two others are seen tumbling over the wall into the Narrow Way. They are come from the land of Vain Glory, and are called Formalist and Hypocrisy. Like the Pilgrim, they are bound for Mount Zion; but the wicket-gate was "too far about," and they had come by a short cut. "They had custom for it a thousand years and more; and custom being of so long standing, would be admitted legal by any impartial judge." Whether right or wrong, they insist that they are in the way, and no more is to be said. But they are soon out of it again. The hill is the hill Difficulty, and the road parts into three. Two go round the bottom, as modern engineers would make them. The other rises straight over the top. Formalist and Hypocrisy choose the easy ways, and are heard of no more. Pilgrim climbs up, and after various accidents comes to the second resting-place, the Palace Beautiful, built by the Lord of the Hill to entertain

strangers in. The recollections of Sir Bevis, of Southampton, furnished Bunyan with his framework. Lions guard the court. Fair ladies entertain him as if he had been a knight-errant in quest of the Holy Grail. The ladies, of course, are all that they ought to be: the Christian graces—Discretion, Prudence, Piety, and Charity. He tells them his history. They ask him if he has brought none of his old belongings with him. He answers Yes, but greatly against his will: his inward and carnal cogitations, with which his countrymen, as well as himself, were so much delighted. Only in golden hours they seemed to leave him. Who cannot recognise the truth of this? Who has not groaned over the follies and idiotcies that cling to us like the doggerel verses that hang about our memories? The room in which he sleeps is called Peace. In the morning he is shown the curiosities, chiefly Scripture relics, in the palace. He is taken to the roof, from which he sees far off the outlines of the Delectable Mountains. Next, the ladies carry him to the armoury, and equip him for the dangers which lie next before him. He is to go down into the Valley of Humiliation, and pass thence through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Bunyan here shows the finest insight. To some pilgrims the Valley of Humiliation was the pleasantest part of the journey. Mr. Feeblemind, in the second part of the story, was happier there than anywhere. But Christian is Bunyan himself; and Bunyan had a stiff, self-willed nature, and had found his spirit the most stubborn part of him. Down here he encounters Apollyon himself, "straddling quite over the whole breadth of the way"—a more effective devil than the Diabolus of *The Holy War*. He fights him for half a day, is sorely wounded in head, hand, and foot, and has a near escape of being pressed to death.

Apollyon spreads his bat wings at last, and flies away; but there remains the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the dark scene of lonely horrors. Two men meet him on the borders of it. They tell him the valley is full of spectres; and they warn him, if he values his life, to go back. Well Bunyan knew these spectres, those dreary misgivings that he was toiling after an illusion; that "good" and "evil" had no meaning except on earth, and for man's convenience; and that he himself was but a creature of a day, allowed a brief season of what is called existence, and then to pass away and be as if he had never been. It speaks well for Bunyan's honesty that this state of mind, which religious people generally call wicked, is placed directly in his Pilgrim's path, and he is compelled to pass through it. In the valley, close at the road-side, there is a pit, which is one of the mouths of hell. A wicked spirit whispers to him as he goes by. He imagines that the thought had proceeded out of his own heart.

The sky clears when he is beyond the gorge. Outside it are the caves where the two giants, Pope and Pagan, had lived in old times. Pagan had been dead many a day. Pope was still living, "but he had grown so crazy and stiff in his joints that he could now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they went by, and biting his nails because he could not come at them."

Here he overtakes Faithful, a true pilgrim like himself. Faithful had met with trials; but his trials have not resembled Christian's. Christian's difficulties, like Bunyan's own, had been all spiritual. "The lusts of the flesh" seem to have had no attraction for him. Faithful had been assailed by Wanton, and had been obliged to fly from her. He had not fallen into the slough; but he had been beguiled by the Old Adam, who offered him one of his daugh-

ters for a wife. In the Valley of the Shadow of Death he had found sunshine all the way. Doubts about the truth of religion had never troubled the simpler nature of the good Faithful.

Mr. Talkative is the next character introduced, and is one of the best figures which Bunyan has drawn; Mr. Talkative, with Scripture at his finger ends, and perfect master of all doctrinal subtleties, ready "to talk of things heavenly or things earthly, things moral or things evangelical, things sacred or things profane, things past or things to come, things foreign or things at home, things essential or things circumstantial, provided that all be done to our profit."

This gentleman would have taken in Faithful, who was awed by such a rush of volubility. Christian has seen him before, knows him well, and can describe him. "He is the son of one Saywell. He dwelt in Prating Row. He is for any company and for any talk. As he talks now with you, so will he talk when on the ale-bench. The more drink he hath in his crown, the more of these things he hath in his mouth. Religion hath no place in his heart, or home, or conversation; all that he hath lieth in his tongue, and his religion is to make a noise therewith."

The elect, though they have ceased to be of the world, are still in the world. They are still part of the general community of mankind, and share, whether they like it or not, in the ordinary activities of life. Faithful and Christian have left the City of Destruction. They have shaken off from themselves all liking for idle pleasures. They nevertheless find themselves in their journey at Vanity Fair, "a fair set up by Beelzebub 5000 years ago." Trade of all sorts went on at Vanity Fair, and people of all sorts were collected there: cheats, fools, asses, knaves, and

rogues. Some were honest, many were dishonest; some lived peaceably and uprightly, others robbed, murdered, seduced their neighbours' wives, or lied and perjured themselves. Vanity Fair was European society as it existed in the days of Charles II. Each nation was represented. There was British Row, French Row, and Spanish Row. "The wares of Rome and her merchandise were greatly promoted at the fair, only the English nation, with some others, had taken a dislike to them." The pilgrims appear on the scene as the Apostles appeared at Antioch and Rome, to tell the people that there were things in the world of more consequence than money and pleasure. The better sort listen. Public opinion in general calls them fools and Bedlamites. The fair becomes excited, disturbances are feared, and the authorities send to make inquiries. Authorities naturally disapprove of novelties; and Christian and Faithful are arrested, beaten, and put in the cage. Their friends insist that they have done no harm, that they are innocent strangers teaching only what will make men better instead of worse. A riot follows. The authorities determine to make an example of them, and the result is the ever-memorable trial of the two pilgrims. They are brought in irons before my Lord Hategood, charged with "disturbing the trade of the town, creating divisions, and making converts to their opinions in contempt of the law of the Prince."

Faithful begins with an admission which would have made it difficult for Hategood to let him off, for he says that the Prince they talked of, being Beelzebub, the enemy of the Lord, he defied him and all his angels. Three witnesses were then called: Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank.

Envy says that Faithful regards neither prince nor peo-

ple, but does all he can to possess men with disloyal notions, which he calls principles of faith and holiness.

Superstition says that he knows little of him, but has heard him say that "our religion is naught, and such by which no man can please God, from which saying his Lordship well knows will follow that we are yet in our sins, and finally shall be damned."

Pickthank deposes that he has heard Faithful rail on Beelzebub, and speak contemptuously of his honourable friends my Lord Old Man, my Lord Carnal Delight, my Lord Luxurious, my Lord Desire of Vain Glory, my Lord Lechery, Sir Having Greedy, and the rest of the nobility, besides which he has railed against his lordship on the bench himself, calling him an ungodly villain.

The evidence was perfectly true, and the prisoner, when called on for his defence, confirmed it. He says (avoiding the terms in which he was said to rail, and the like) that "the Prince of the town, with all the rabblement of his attendants by this gentleman named, are more fit for a being in hell than in this town or country."

Lord Hategood has been supposed to have been drawn from one or other of Charles II.'s judges, perhaps from either Twisden or Chester, who had the conversation with Bunyan's wife. But it is difficult to see how either one or the other could have acted otherwise than they did. Faithful might be quite right. Hell might be, and probably was, the proper place for Beelzebub, and for all persons holding authority under him. But as a matter of fact, a form of society did for some purpose or other exist, and had been permitted to exist for 5000 years, owning Beelzebub's sovereignty. It must defend itself, or must cease to be, and it could not be expected to make no effort at self-preservation. Faithful had come to Vanity Fair to

make a revolution—a revolution extremely desirable, but one which it was unreasonable to expect the constituted authorities to allow to go forward. It was not a case of false witness. A prisoner who admits that he has taught the people that their Prince ought to be in hell, and has called the judge an ungodly villain, cannot complain if he is accused of preaching rebellion.

Lord Hategood charges the jury, and explains the law. "There was an Act made," he says, "in the days of Pharaoh the Great, servant to our Prince, that lest those of a contrary religion should multiply and grow too strong for him, their males should be thrown into the river. There was also an Act made in the days of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, that whoever would not fall down and worship his golden image should be thrown into a fiery furnace. There was also an Act made in the days of Darius that whoso for some time called upon any God but him should be cast into the lion's den. Now the substance of these laws this rebel hath broken, not only in thought (which is not to be borne), but also in word and deed, which must, therefore, be intolerable. For that of Pharaoh, his law was made upon a supposition to prevent mischief, no crime being yet apparent. For the second and third you see his disputations against our religion, and for the treason he hath confessed he deserveth to die the death."

"Then went the jury out, whose names were Mr. Blindman, Mr. Nogood, Mr. Malice, Mr. Lovelust, Mr. Liveloose, Mr. Heady, Mr. Highmind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Liar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hatelight, and Mr. Implacable, who every one gave in his private verdict against him among themselves, and afterwards unanimously concluded to bring him in guilty before the judge. And first, Mr. Blindman, the

foreman, said: I see clearly that this man is a heretic. Then said Mr. Nogood, Away with such a fellow from the earth. Aye, said Mr. Malice, I hate the very looks of him. Then said Mr. Lovelust, I could never endure him. Nor I, said Mr. Liveloose, for he would always be condemning my way. Hang him, hang him, said Mr. Heady. A sorry scrub, said Mr. Highmind. My heart riseth against him, said Mr. Enmity. He is a rogue, said Mr. Liar. Hanging is too good for him, said Mr. Cruelty. Let us despatch him out of the way, said Mr. Hatelight. Then, said Mr. Implacable, might I have all the world given me, I could not be reconciled to him; therefore, let us forthwith bring him in guilty of death."

Abstract qualities of character were never clothed in more substantial flesh and blood than these jurymen. Spenser's knights in the *Fairy Queen* are mere shadows to them. Faithful was, of course, condemned, scourged, buffeted, lanced in his feet with knives, stoned, stabbed, at last burned, and spared the pain of travelling further on the narrow road. A chariot and horses were waiting to bear him through the clouds, the nearest way to the Celestial Gate. Christian, who it seems had been remanded, contrives to escape. He is joined by Hopeful, a convert whom he has made in the town, and they pursue their journey in company. A second person is useful dramatically, and Hopeful takes Faithful's place. Leaving Vanity Fair, they are again on the Pilgrim's road. There they encounter Mr. Bye-ends. Bye-ends comes from the town of Plain-Speech, where he has a large kindred, My Lord Turnabout, my Lord Timeserver, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Two Tongues, the parson of the parish. Bye-ends himself was married to a daughter of Lady Feignings. Bunyan's invention in such things was inexhaustible.

They have more trials of the old kind with which Bunyan himself was so familiar. They cross the River of Life and even drink at it, yet for all this, and directly after, they stray into Bye-path Meadow. They lose themselves in the grounds of Doubting Castle, and are seized upon by Giant Despair—still a prey to doubt—still uncertain whether religion be not a dream, even after they have fought with wild beasts in Vanity Fair and have drunk of the water of life. Nowhere does Bunyan show better how well he knew the heart of man. Christian even thinks of killing himself in the dungeons of Doubting Castle. Hopeful cheers him up; they break their prison, recover the road again, and arrive at the Delectable Mountains in Emmanuel's own land. There it might be thought the danger would be over, but it is not so. Even in Emmanuel's Land there is a door in the side of a hill which is a byeway to hell, and beyond Emmanuel's Land is the country of conceit, a new and special temptation for those who think that they are near salvation. Here they encounter "a brisk lad of the neighbourhood," needed soon after for a particular purpose, who is a good liver, prays devoutly, fasts regularly, pays tithes punctually, and hopes that everyone will get to heaven by the religion which he professes, provided he fears God and tries to do his duty. The name of this brisk lad is Ignorance. Leaving him, they are caught in a net by Flatterer, and are smartly whipped by "a shining one," who lets them out of it. False ideas and vanity lay them open once more to their most dangerous enemy. They meet a man coming toward them from the direction in which they are going. They tell him that they are on the way to Mount Zion. He laughs scornfully, and answers:—

"There is no such place as you dream of in all the

world. When I was at home in my own country, I heard as you now affirm, and from hearing I went out to see; and have been seeking this city these twenty years, but I find no more of it than I did the first day I went out. I am going back again, and will seek to refresh myself with things which I then cast away for hopes of that which I now see is not."

Still uncertainty—even on the verge of eternity—strange, doubtless, and reprehensible to Right Reverend persons, who never "cast away" anything; to whom a religious profession has been a highway to pleasure and preferment, who live in the comfortable assurance that as it has been in this life so it will be in the next. Only moral obliquity of the worst kind could admit a doubt about so excellent a religion as this. But Bunyan was not a Right Reverend. Christianity had brought him no palaces and large revenues, and a place among the great of the land. If Christianity was not true, his whole life was folly and illusion, and the dread that it might be so clung to his belief like its shadow.

The way was still long. The pilgrims reach the Enchanted Ground, and are drowsy and tired. Ignorance comes up with them again. He talks much about himself. He tells them of the good motives that come into his mind and comfort him as he walks. His heart tells him that he has left all for God and heaven. His belief and his life agree together, and he is humbly confident that his hopes are well-founded. When they speak to him of Salvation by Faith and Conviction by Sin, he cannot understand what they mean. As he leaves them they are reminded of one Temporary, "once a forward man in religion." Temporary dwelt in Graceless, "a town two miles from Honesty, next door to one Turnback." He

"was going on pilgrimage, but became acquainted with one Save Self, and was never more heard of."

These figures all mean something. They correspond in part to Bunyan's own recollection of his own trials. Partly he is indulging his humour by describing others who were more astray than he was. It was over at last: the pilgrims arrive at the land of Beulah, the beautiful sunset after the storms were all past. Doubting Castle can be seen no more, and between them and their last rest there remains only the deep river over which there is no bridge, the river of Death. On the hill beyond the waters glitter the towers and domes of the Celestial City; but through the river they must first pass, and they find it deeper or shallower according to the strength of their faith. They go through, Hopeful feeling the bottom all along; Christian still in character, not without some horror, and frightened by hobgoblins. On the other side they are received by angels, and are carried to their final home, to live for ever in the Prince's presence. Then follows the only passage which the present writer reads with regret in this admirable book. It is given to the self-righteous Ignorance, who, doubtless, had been provoking with "his good motives that comforted him as he walked;" but Bunyan's zeal might have been satisfied by inflicting a lighter chastisement upon him. He comes up to the river: he crosses without the difficulties which attended Christian and Hopeful. "It happened that there was then at the place one Vain Hope, a Ferryman, that with his boat" (some viaticum or priestly absolution) "helped him over." He ascends the hill, and approaches the city, but no angels are in attendance, "neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement." Above the gate there was the verse written—"Blessed are they that do His commandments,

that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gate into the city." Bunyan, who believed that no man could keep the commandments, and had no right to anything but damnation, must have introduced the words as if to mock the unhappy wretch who, after all, had tried to keep the commandments as well as most people, and was seeking admittance, with a conscience moderately at ease. "He was asked by the men that looked over the gate—Whence come you, and what would you have?" He answered, "I have eaten and drunk in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our street." Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go in and show it to the king. So he fumbled in his bosom for one, and found none. Then said they, "Have you none?" But the man answered never a word. So they told the king; but he would not come down to see him, but commanded the two shining ones that conducted Christian and Hopeful to the city, to go out and take Ignorance and bind him hand and foot, and have him away. Then they took him up and carried him through the air to the door in the side of the hill, and put him in there. "Then," so Bunyan ends, "I saw that there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction; so I awoke, and behold it was a dream!"

Poor Ignorance! Hell—such a place as Bunyan imagined hell to be—was a hard fate for a miserable mortal who had failed to comprehend the true conditions of justification. We are not told that he was a vain boaster. He could not have advanced so near to the door of heaven if he had not been really a decent man, though vain and silly. Behold, it was a dream! The dreams which come to us when sleep is deep on the soul may be sent direct

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from some revealing power. When we are near waking, the supernatural insight may be refracted through human theory.

Charity will hope that the vision of Ignorance cast bound into the mouth of hell, when he was knocking at the gate of heaven, came through Homer's ivory gate, and that Bunyan here was a mistaken interpreter of the spiritual tradition. The fierce inferences of Puritan theology are no longer credible to us; yet nobler men than the Puritans are not to be found in all English history. It will be well if the clearer sight which enables us to detect their errors enables us also to recognise their excellence.

The second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, like most second parts, is but a feeble reverberation of the first. It is comforting, no doubt, to know that Christian's wife and children were not left to their fate in the City of Destruction. But Bunyan had given us all that he had to tell about the journey, and we do not need a repetition of it. Of course there are touches of genius. No writing of Bunyan's could be wholly without it. But the rough simplicity is gone, and instead of it there is a tone of sentiment which is almost mawkish. Giants, dragons, and angelic champions carry us into a spurious fairy-land, where the knight-errant is a preacher in disguise. Fair ladies and love matches, however decorously chastened, suit ill with the sternness of the moral conflict between the soul and sin. Christiana and her children are tolerated for the pilgrim's sake to whom they belong. Had they appealed to our interest on their own merits, we would have been contented to wish them well through their difficulties, and to trouble ourselves no further about them.

CHAPTER X.

LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

LITTLE remains to be told of Bunyan's concluding years. No friends preserved his letters. No diaries of his own survive to gratify curiosity. Men truly eminent think too meanly of themselves or their work to care much to be personally remembered. He lived for sixteen years after his release from the gaol, and those years were spent in the peaceful discharge of his congregational duties, in writing, in visiting the scattered members of the Baptist communion, or in preaching in the villages and woods. His outward circumstances were easy. He had a small but well-provided house in Bedford, into which he collected rare and valuable pieces of old furniture and plate, and other articles—presents, probably, from those who admired him. He visited London annually to preach in the Baptist churches. *The Pilgrim's Progress* spread his fame over England, over Europe, and over the American settlements. It was translated into many languages; and so catholic was its spirit, that it was adapted with a few alterations for the use even of the Catholics themselves. He abstained, as he had done steadily throughout his life, from all interference with politics, and the Government in turn never again meddled with him. He even received offers of promotion to larger spheres of action, which

might have tempted a meaner nature. But he could never be induced to leave Bedford, and there he quietly stayed through changes of ministry, Popish plots, and Monmouth rebellions, while the terror of a restoration of Popery was bringing on the Revolution—careless of kings and cabinets, and confident that Giant Pope had lost his power for harm, and thenceforward could only bite his nails at the passing pilgrims. Once only, after the failure of the Exclusion Bill, he seems to have feared that violent measures might again be tried against him. It is even said that he was threatened with arrest, and it was on this occasion that he made over his property to his wife. The policy of James II., however, transparently treacherous though it was, for the time gave security to the Nonconformist congregations; and in the years which immediately preceded the final expulsion of the Stuarts, liberty of conscience was under fewer restrictions than it had been in the most rigorous days of the Reformation, or under the Long Parliament itself. Thus the anxiety passed away, and Bunyan was left undisturbed to finish his earthly work.

He was happy in his family. His blind child, for whom he had been so touchingly anxious, had died while he was in prison. His other children lived and did well; and his brave companion, who had spoken so stoutly for him to the judges, continued at his side. His health, it was said, had suffered from his confinement; but the only serious illness which we hear of was an attack of "sweating sickness," which came upon him in 1687, and from which he never thoroughly recovered. He was then fifty-nine, and in the next year he died.

His end was characteristic. It was brought on by exposure when he was engaged in an act of charity. A

quarrel had broken out in a family at Reading with which Bunyan had some acquaintance. A father had taken offence at his son, and threatened to disinherit him. Bunyan undertook a journey on horseback from Bedford to Reading in the hope of reconciling them. He succeeded, but at the cost of his life. Returning by London, he was overtaken on the road by a storm of rain, and was wetted through before he could find shelter. The chill, falling on a constitution already weakened by illness, brought on fever. He was able to reach the house of Mr. Strudwick, one his London friends; but he never left his bed afterwards. In ten days he was dead. The exact date is uncertain. It was towards the end of August, 1688, between two and three months before the landing of King William. He was buried in Mr. Strudwick's vault, in the Dissenters' burying-ground at Bunhill Fields. His last words were, "Take me, for I come to Thee."

So ended, at the age of sixty, a man who, if his importance may be measured by the influence which he has exerted over succeeding generations, must be counted among the most extraordinary persons whom England has produced. It has been the fashion to dwell on the disadvantages of his education, and to regret the carelessness of nature which brought into existence a man of genius in a tinker's hut at Elstow. Nature is less partial than she appears, and all situations in life have their compensations along with them.

Circumstances, I should say, qualified Bunyan perfectly well for the work which he had to do. If he had gone to school, as he said, with Aristotle and Plato; if he had been broken in at a university and been turned into a bishop; if he had been in any one of the learned professions, he might easily have lost, or might have never known,

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the secret of his powers. He was born to be the Poet-apostle of the English middle classes, imperfectly educated like himself; and, being one of themselves, he had the key of their thoughts and feelings in his own heart. Like nine out of ten of his countrymen, he came into the world with no fortune but his industry. He had to work with his hands for his bread, and to advance by the side of his neighbours along the road of common business. His knowledge was scanty, though of rare quality. He knew his Bible probably by heart. He had studied history in Foxe's *Martyrs*, but nowhere else that we can trace. The rest of his mental furniture was gathered at first hand from his conscience, his life, and his occupations. Thus, every idea which he received falling into a soil naturally fertile, sprouted up fresh, vigorous, and original. He confessed to have felt (as a man of his powers could hardly have failed to feel) continued doubts about the Bible and the reality of the Divine government. It has been well said that when we look into the world to find the image of God, it is as if we were to stand before a looking-glass, expecting to see ourselves reflected there, and to see nothing. Education scarcely improves our perception in this respect; and wider information, wider acquaintance with the thoughts of other men in other ages and countries, might as easily have increased his difficulties as have assisted him in overcoming them. He was not a man who could have contented himself with compromises and half-convictions. No force could have subdued him into a decent Anglican divine—a "Mr. Two Tongues, parson of the parish." He was passionate and thorough-going. The authority of conscience presented itself to him only in the shape of religious obligation. Religion once shaken into a "perhaps," would have had no existence to him;

and it is easy to conceive a university-bred Bunyan, an intellectual meteor, flaring uselessly across the sky and disappearing in smoke and nothingness.

Powerful temperaments are necessarily intense. Bunyan, born a tinker, had heard right and wrong preached to him in the name of the Christian creed. He concluded after a struggle that Christianity was true, and on that conviction he built himself up into what he was. It might have been the same, perhaps, with Burns had he been born a century before. Given Christianity as an unquestionably true account of the situation and future prospects of man, the feature of it most appalling to the imagination is that hell-fire—a torment exceeding the most horrible which fancy can conceive, and extending into eternity—awaits the enormous majority of the human race. The dreadful probability seized hold on the young Bunyan's mind. He shuddered at it when awake. In the visions of the night it came before him in the tremendous details of the dreadful reality. It became the governing thought in his nature.

Such a belief, if it does not drive a man to madness, will at least cure him of trifling. It will clear his mind of false sentiment, take the nonsense out of him, and enable him to resist vulgar temptation as nothing else will. The danger is that the mind may not bear the strain, that the belief itself may crack and leave nothing. Bunyan was hardly tried, but in him the belief did not crack. It spread over his character. It filled him first with terror; then with a loathing of sin, which entailed so awful a penalty; then, as his personal fears were allayed by the recognition of Christ, it turned to tenderness and pity.

There was no fanaticism in Bunyan; nothing harsh or savage. His natural humour perhaps saved him. His

few recorded sayings all refer to the one central question ; but healthy seriousness often best expresses itself in playful quaintness. He was once going somewhere disguised as a waggoner. He was overtaken by a constable who had a warrant to arrest him. The constable asked him if he knew that devil of a fellow Bunyan. "Know him!" Bunyan said. "You might call him a devil if you knew him as well as I once did."

A Cambridge student was trying to show him what a divine thing reason was—"reason, the chief glory of man, which distinguished him from a beast," &c., &c.

Bunyan growled out: "Sin distinguishes man from beast. Is sin divine?"

He was extremely tolerant in his terms of Church membership. He offended the stricter part of his congregation by refusing even to make infant baptism a condition of exclusion. The only persons with whom he declined to communicate were those whose lives were openly immoral. His chief objection to the Church of England was the admission of the ungodly to the Sacraments. He hated party titles and quarrels upon trifles. He desired himself to be called a Christian or a Believer, or "any name which was approved by the Holy Ghost." Divisions, he said, were to Churches like wars to countries. Those who talked most about religion cared least for it; and controversies about doubtful things, and things of little moment, ate up all zeal for things which were practicable and indisputable.

"In countenance," wrote a friend, "he appeared to be of a stern and rough temper, but in his conversation mild and affable; not given to loquacity or to much discourse in company unless some urgent occasion required it; observing never to boast of himself or his parts, but rather to seem low in his own eyes, and submit himself to the

judgment of others; abhorring lying and swearing; being just, in all that lay in his power, to his word; not seeming to revenge injuries; loving to reconcile differences and make friendships with all. He had a sharp, quick eye, with an excellent discerning of persons, being of good judgment and quick wit." "He was tall of stature, strong-boned, though not corpulent, somewhat of a ruddy face, with sparkling eyes, wearing his hair on his upper lip; his hair reddish, but in his later days time had sprinkled it with grey; his nose well set, but not declining or bending; his mouth moderate large, his forehead something high, and his habit always plain and modest."

He was himself indifferent to advancement, and he did not seek it for his family. A London merchant offered to take his son into his house. "God," he said, "did not send me to advance my family, but to preach the Gospel." He had no vanity—an exemption extremely rare in those who are personally much before the public. The personal popularity was in fact the part of his situation which he least liked. When he was to preach in London, "if there was but one day's notice the meeting-house was crowded to overflowing." Twelve hundred people would be found collected before seven o'clock on a dark winter's morning to hear a lecture from him. In Zoar Street, Southwark, his church was sometimes so crowded that he had to be lifted to the pulpit stairs over the congregation's heads. It pleased him, but he was on the watch against the pleasure of being himself admired. A friend complimented him once, after service, on "the sweet sermon" which he had delivered. "You need not remind me of that," he said. "The devil told me of it before I was out of the pulpit."

"Conviction of sin" has become a conventional phrase,

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shallow and ineffective even in those who use it most sincerely. Yet moral evil is still the cause of nine-tenths of the misery in the world, and it is not easy to measure the value of a man who could prolong the conscious sense of the deadly nature of it, even under the forms of a decomposing theology. Times are changing. The intellectual current is bearing us we know not where, and the course of the stream is in a direction which leads us far from the conclusions in which Bunyan and the Puritans established themselves; but the truths which are most essential for us to know cannot be discerned by speculative arguments. Chemistry cannot tell us why some food is wholesome and other food is poisonous. That food is best for us which best nourishes the body into health and strength; and a belief in a Supernatural Power which has given us a law to live by, and to which we are responsible for our conduct, has alone, of all the influences known to us, succeeded in ennobling and elevating the character of man. The particular theories which men have formed about it have often been wild and extravagant. Imagination, agitated by fear or stimulated by pious enthusiasm, has peopled heaven with demigods and saints—creations of fancy, human forms projected upon a mist and magnified into celestial images. How much is true of all that men have believed in past times and have now ceased to believe, how much has been a too eager dream, no one now can tell. It may be that other foundations may be laid hereafter for human conduct on which an edifice can be raised no less fair and beautiful; but no signs of it are as yet apparent.

So far as we yet know, morality rests upon a sense of obligation; and obligation has no meaning except as implying a Divine command, without which it would



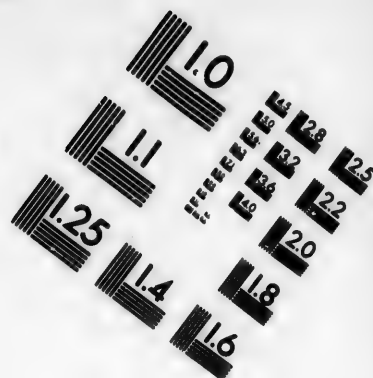
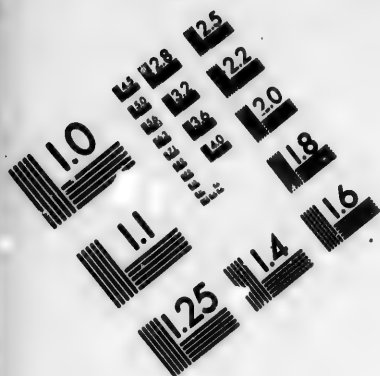
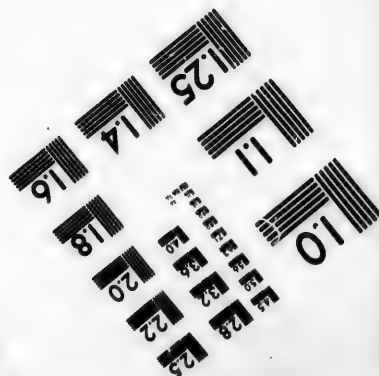
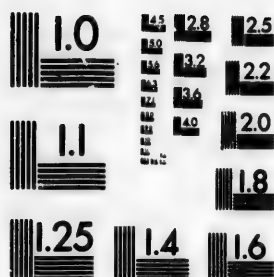


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cence to be. Until "duty" can be presented to us in a shape which will compel our recognition of it with equal or superior force, the passing away of "the conviction of sin" can operate only to obscure our aspirations after a high ideal of life and character. The scientific theory may be correct, and it is possible that we may be standing on the verge of the most momentous intellectual revolution which has been experienced in the history of our race. It may be so, and also it may not be so. It may be that the most important factors in the scientific equation are beyond the reach of human intellect. However it be, the meat which gives strength to the man is poison to the child; and as yet we are still children, and are likely to remain children. "Every relief from outward restraint," says one who was not given to superstition, "if it be not attended with increased power of self-command, is simply fatal." Men of intelligence, therefore, to whom life is not a theory but a stern fact, conditioned round with endless possibilities of wrong and suffering, though they may never again adopt the letter of Bunyan's creed, will continue to see in conscience an authority for which culture is no substitute; they will conclude that in one form or other responsibility is not a fiction but a truth; and, so long as this conviction lasts, *The Pilgrim's Progress* will still be dear to all men of all creeds who share in it, even though it pleases the "elect" modern philosophers to describe its author as a "Philistine of genius."

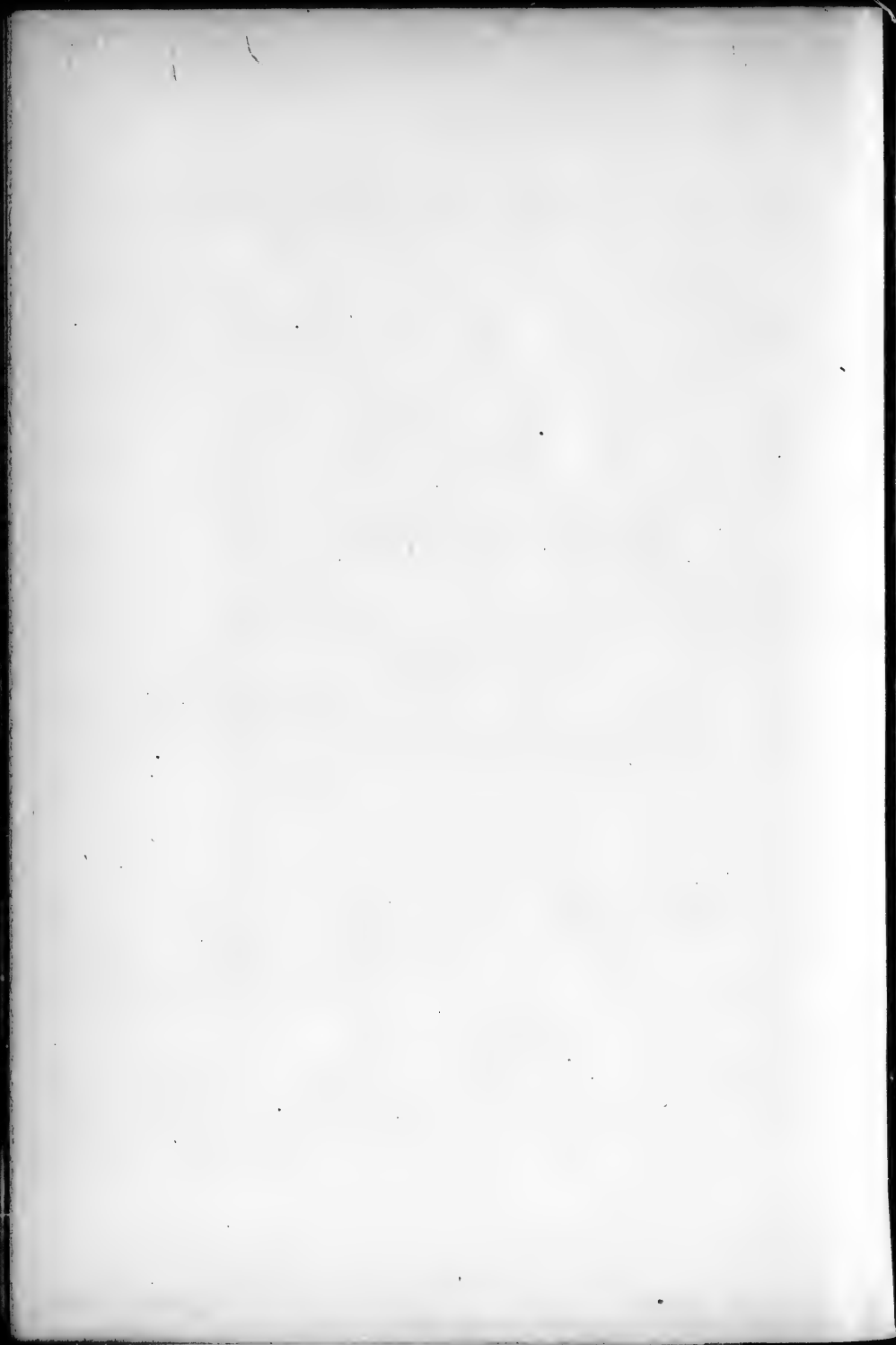
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JOHNSON

BY

LESLIE STEPHEN



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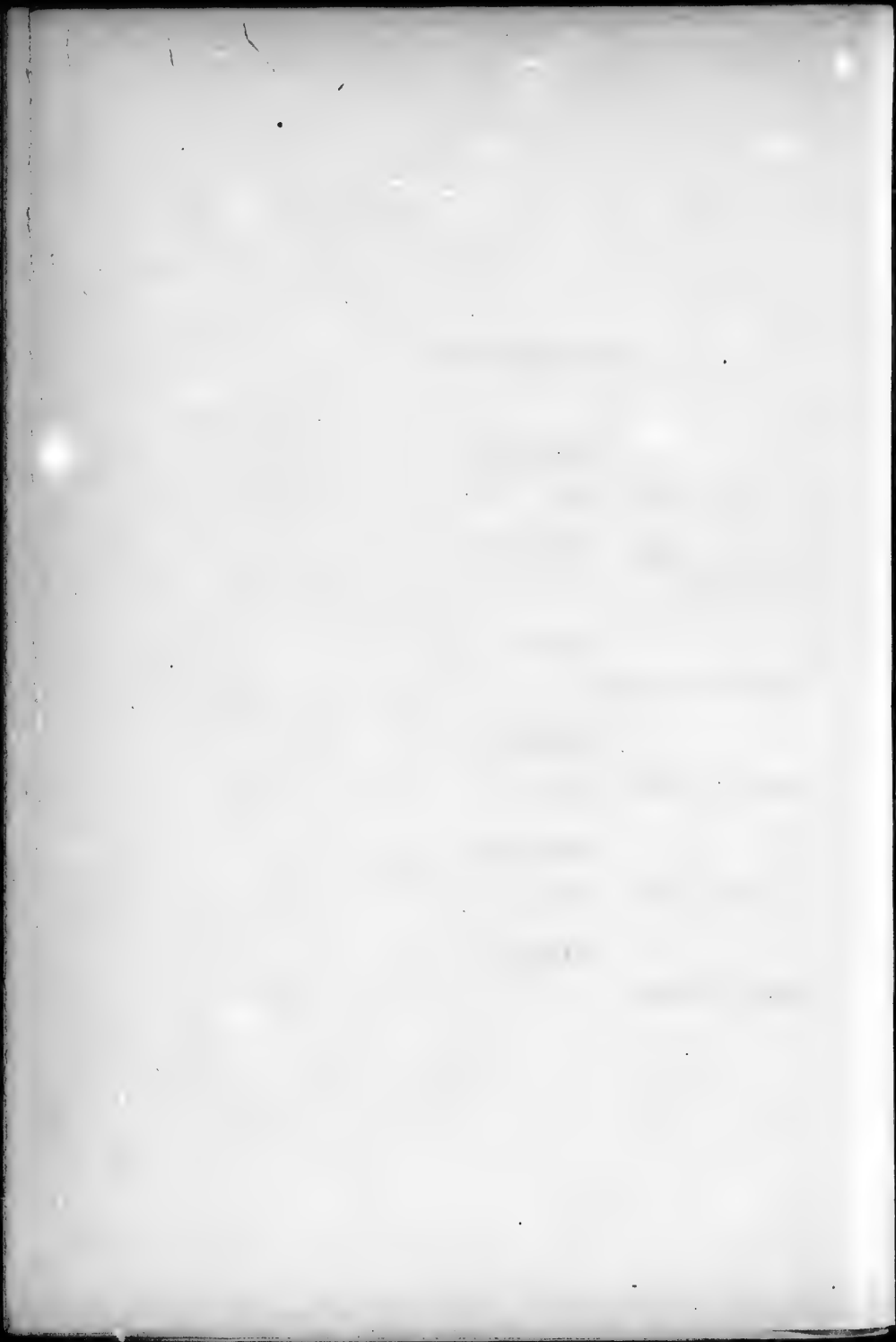
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SAMUEL JOHNSON.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY LIFE.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born in Lichfield in 1709. His father, Michael Johnson, was a bookseller, highly respected by the cathedral clergy, and for a time sufficiently prosperous to be a magistrate of the town, and, in the year of his son's birth, sheriff of the county. He opened a bookstall on market-days at neighbouring towns, including Birmingham, which was as yet unable to maintain a separate bookseller. The tradesman often exaggerates the prejudices of the class whose wants he supplies, and Michael Johnson was probably a more devoted High Churchman and Tory than many of the cathedral clergy themselves. He reconciled himself with difficulty to taking the oaths against the exiled dynasty. He was a man of considerable mental and physical power, but tormented by hypochondriacal tendencies. His son inherited a share both of his constitution and of his principles. Long afterwards Samuel associated with his childish days a faint but solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds and long black hood. The lady

was Queen Anne, to whom, in compliance with a superstition just dying a natural death, he had been taken by his mother to be touched for the king's evil. The touch was ineffectual. Perhaps, as Boswell suggested, he ought to have been presented to the genuine heirs of the Stuarts in Rome. Disease and superstition had thus stood by his cradle, and they never quitted him during life. The demon of hypochondria was always lying in wait for him, and could be exorcised for a time only by hard work or social excitement. Of this we shall hear enough; but it may be as well to sum up at once some of the physical characteristics which marked him through life and greatly influenced his career.

The disease had scarred and disfigured features otherwise regular and always impressive. It had seriously injured his eyes, entirely destroying, it seems, the sight of one. He could not, it is said, distinguish a friend's face half a yard off, and pictures were to him meaningless patches, in which he could never see the resemblance to their objects. The statement is perhaps exaggerated; for he could see enough to condemn a portrait of himself. He expressed some annoyance when Reynolds had painted him with a pen held close to his eye; and protested that he would not be handed down to posterity as "blinking Sam." It seems that habits of minute attention atoned in some degree for this natural defect. Boswell tells us how Johnson once corrected him as to the precise shape of a mountain; and Mrs. Thrale says that he was a close and exacting critic of ladies' dress, even to the accidental position of a riband. He could even lay down æsthetical canons upon such matters. He reproved her for wearing a dark dress as unsuitable to a "little creature." "What," he asked, "have not all insects gay colours?" His insen-

ability to music was even more pronounced than his dullness of sight. On hearing it said, in praise of a musical performance, that it was in any case difficult, his feeling comment was, "I wish it had been impossible!"

The queer convulsions by which he amazed all beholders were probably connected with his disease, though he and Reynolds ascribed them simply to habit. When entering a doorway with his blind companion, Miss Williams, he would suddenly desert her on the step in order to "whirl and twist about" in strange gesticulations. The performance partook of the nature of a superstitious ceremonial. He would stop in a street or the middle of a room to go through it correctly. Once he collected a laughing mob in Twickenham meadows by his antics; his hands imitating the motions of a jockey riding at full speed and his feet twisting in and out to make heels and toes touch alternately. He presently sat down and took out a *Grotius De Veritate*, over which he "seesawed" so violently that the mob ran back to see what was the matter. Once in such a fit he suddenly twisted off the shoe of a lady who sat by him. Sometimes he seemed to be obeying some hidden impulse, which commanded him to touch every post in a street or tread on the centre of every paving-stone, and would return if his task had not been accurately performed.

In spite of such oddities, he was not only possessed of physical power corresponding to his great height and massive stature, but was something of a proficient at athletic exercises. He was conversant with the theory, at least, of boxing; a knowledge probably acquired from an uncle who kept the ring at Smithfield for a year, and was never beaten in boxing or wrestling. His constitutional fearlessness would have made him a formidable antagonist.

Hawkins describes the oak staff, six feet in length and increasing from one to three inches in diameter, which lay ready to his hand when he expected an attack from Macpherson of Ossian celebrity. Once he is said to have taken up a chair at the theatre upon which a man had seated himself during his temporary absence, and to have tossed it and its occupant bodily into the pit. He would swim into pools said to be dangerous, beat huge dogs into peace, climb trees, and even run races and jump gates. Once at least he went out foxhunting, and though he despised the amusement, was deeply touched by the complimentary assertion that he rode as well as the most illiterate fellow in England. Perhaps the most whimsical of his performances was when, in his fifty-fifth year, he went to the top of a high hill with his friend Langton. "I have not had a roll for a long time," said the great lexicographer suddenly, and, after deliberately emptying his pockets, he laid himself parallel to the edge of the hill, and descended, turning over and over till he came to the bottom. We may believe, as Mrs. Thrale remarks upon his jumping over a stool to show that he was not tired by his hunting, that his performances in this kind were so strange and uncouth that a fear for the safety of his bones quenched the spectator's tendency to laugh.

In such a strange case was imprisoned one of the most vigorous intellects of the time. Vast strength hampered by clumsiness and associated with grievous disease, deep and massive powers of feeling limited by narrow though acute perceptions, were characteristic both of soul and body. These peculiarities were manifested from his early infancy. Miss Seward, a typical specimen of the provincial *précieuse*, attempted to trace them in an epitaph which he was said to have written at the age of three.

Here lies good master duck
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on ;
If it had lived, it had been good luck,
For then we had had an odd one.

The verses, however, were really made by his father, who passed them off as the child's, and illustrate nothing but the paternal vanity. In fact the boy was regarded as something of an infant prodigy. His great powers of memory, characteristic of a mind singularly retentive of all impressions, were early developed. He seemed to learn by intuition. Indolence, as in his after life, alternated with brief efforts of strenuous exertion. His want of sight prevented him from sharing in the ordinary childish sports ; and one of his great pleasures was in reading old romances—a taste which he retained through life. Boys of this temperament are generally despised by their fellows ; but Johnson seems to have had the power of enforcing the respect of his companions. Three of the lads used to come for him in the morning and carry him in triumph to school, seated upon the shoulders of one and supported on each side by his companions.

After learning to read at a dame-school, and from a certain Tom Brown, of whom it is only recorded that he published a spelling-book and dedicated it to the Universe, young Samuel was sent to the Lichfield Grammar School, and was afterwards, for a short time, apparently in the character of pupil-teacher, at the school of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire. A good deal of Latin was "whipped into him," and though he complained of the excessive severity of two of his teachers, he was always a believer in the virtues of the rod. A child, he said, who is flogged, "gets his task, and there's an end on't ; whereas by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the

foundations of lasting mischief; you make brothers and sisters hate each other." In practice, indeed, this stern disciplinarian seems to have been specially indulgent to children. The memory of his own sorrows made him value their happiness, and he rejoiced greatly when he at last persuaded a schoolmaster to remit the old-fashioned holiday-task.

Johnson left school at sixteen and spent two years at home, probably in learning his father's business. This seems to have been the chief period of his studies. Long afterwards he said that he knew almost as much at eighteen as he did at the age of fifty-three—the date of the remark. His father's shop would give him many opportunities, and he devoured what came in his way with the indiscriminating eagerness of a young student. His intellectual resembled his physical appetite. He gorged books. He tore the hearts out of them, but did not study systematically. Do you read books through? he asked indignantly of some one who expected from him such supererogatory labour. His memory enabled him to accumulate great stores of a desultory and unsystematic knowledge. Somehow he became a fine Latin scholar, though never first-rate as a Grecian. The direction of his studies was partly determined by the discovery of a folio of Petrarch, lying on a shelf where he was looking for apples; and one of his earliest literary plans, never carried out, was an edition of Politian, with a history of Latin poetry from the time of Petrarch. When he went to the University at the end of this period, he was in possession of a very unusual amount of reading.

Meanwhile he was beginning to feel the pressure of poverty. His father's affairs were probably getting into disorder. One anecdote—it is one which it is difficult

to read without emotion—refers to this period. Many years afterwards, Johnson, worn by disease and the hard struggle of life, was staying at Lichfield, where a few old friends still survived, but in which every street must have revived the memories of the many who had long since gone over to the majority. He was missed one morning at breakfast, and did not return till supper-time. Then he told how his time had been passed. On that day fifty years before, his father, confined by illness, had begged him to take his place to sell books at a stall at Uttoxeter. Pride made him refuse. "To do away with the sin of this disobedience, I this day went in a post-chaise to Uttoxeter, and going into the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head and stood with it bare an hour before the stall which my father had formerly used, exposed to the sneers of the standers-by and the inclemency of the weather; a penance by which I trust I have propitiated Heaven for this only instance, I believe, of contumacy to my father." If the anecdote illustrates the touch of superstition in Johnson's mind, it reveals too that sacred depth of tenderness which ennobled his character. No repentance can ever wipe out the past or make it be as though it had not been; but the remorse of a fine character may be transmuted into a permanent source of nobler views of life and the world.

There are difficulties in determining the circumstances and duration of Johnson's stay at Oxford. He began residence at Pembroke College in 1728. It seems probable that he received some assistance from a gentleman whose son took him as companion, and from the clergy of Lichfield, to whom his father was known, and who were aware of the son's talents. Possibly his college assisted him during part of the time. It

is certain that he left without taking a degree, though he probably resided for nearly three years. It is certain, also, that his father's bankruptcy made his stay difficult, and that the period must have been one of trial.

The effect of the Oxford residence upon Johnson's mind was characteristic. The lad already suffered from the attacks of melancholy, which sometimes drove him to the borders of insanity. At Oxford, Law's *Serious Call* gave him the strong religious impressions which remained through life. But he does not seem to have been regarded as a gloomy or a religious youth by his contemporaries. When told in after years that he had been described as a "gay and frolicsome fellow," he replied, "Ah! sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority." Though a hearty supporter of authority in principle, Johnson was distinguished through life by the strongest spirit of personal independence and self-respect. He held, too, the sound doctrine, deplored by his respectable biographer Hawkins, that the scholar's life, like the Christian's, levelled all distinctions of rank. When an officious benefactor put a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation. He seems to have treated his tutors with a contempt which Boswell politely attributed to "great fortitude of mind," but Johnson himself set down as "stark insensibility." The life of a poor student is not, one may fear, even yet exempt from much bitterness, and in those days the position was far more servile than at present. The servitors and sizers had much to bear from richer companions. A proud melancholy lad, conscious of great powers, had

to meet with hard rebuffs, and tried to meet them by returning scorn for scorn.

Such distresses, however, did not shake Johnson's rooted Toryism. He fully imbibed, if he did not already share, the strongest prejudices of the place, and his misery never produced a revolt against the system, though it may have fostered insolence to individuals. Three of the most eminent men with whom Johnson came in contact in later life, had also been students at Oxford. Wesley, his senior by six years, was a fellow of Lincoln whilst Johnson was an undergraduate, and was learning at Oxford the necessity of rousing his countrymen from the religious lethargy into which they had sunk. "Have not pride and haughtiness of spirit, impatience, and peevishness, sloth and indolence, gluttony and sensuality, and even a proverbial uselessness been objected to us, perhaps not always by our enemies nor wholly without ground?" So said Wesley, preaching before the University of Oxford in 1744, and the words in his mouth imply more than the preacher's formality. Adam Smith, Johnson's junior by fourteen years, was so impressed by the utter indifference of Oxford authorities to their duties, as to find in it an admirable illustration of the consequences of the neglect of the true principles of supply and demand implied in the endowment of learning. Gibbon, his junior by twenty-eight years, passed at Oxford the "most idle and unprofitable" months of his whole life; and was, he said, as willing to disclaim the university for a mother, as she could be to renounce him for a son. Oxford, as judged by these men, was remarkable as an illustration of the spiritual and intellectual decadence of a body which at other times has been a centre of great movements of thought. Johnson, though his experience was rougher than any of the three.

loved Oxford as though she had not been a harsh step-mother to his youth. Sir, he said fondly of his college, "we are a nest of singing-birds." Most of the strains are now pretty well forgotten, and some of them must at all times have been such as we scarcely associate with the nightingale. Johnson, however, cherished his college friendships, delighted in paying visits to his old university, and was deeply touched by the academical honours by which Oxford long afterwards recognized an eminence scarcely fostered by its protection. Far from sharing the doctrines of Adam Smith, he only regretted that the universities were not richer, and expressed a desire which will be understood by advocates of the "endowment of research," that there were many places of a thousand a year at Oxford.

On leaving the University, in 1731, the world was all before him. His father died in the end of the year, and Johnson's whole immediate inheritance was twenty pounds. Where was he to turn for daily bread? Even in those days, most gates were barred with gold and opened but to golden keys. The greatest chance for a poor man was probably through the Church. The career of Warburton, who rose from a similar position to a bishopric might have been rivalled by Johnson, and his connexions with Lichfield might, one would suppose, have helped him to a start. It would be easy to speculate upon causes which might have hindered such a career. In later life, he more than once refused to take orders upon the promise of a living. Johnson, as we know him, was a man of the world; though a religious man of the world. He represents the secular rather than the ecclesiastical type. So far as his mode of teaching goes, he is rather a disciple of Socrates than of St. Paul or Wesley. According to

him, a "tavern-chair" was "the throne of human felicity," and supplied a better arena than the pulpit for the utterance of his message to mankind. And, though his external circumstances doubtless determined his method, there was much in his character which made it congenial. Johnson's religious emotions were such as to make habitual reserve almost a sanitary necessity. They were deeply coloured by his constitutional melancholy. Fear of death and hell were prominent in his personal creed. To trade upon his feelings like a charlatan would have been abhorrent to his masculine character; and to give them full and frequent utterance like a genuine teacher of mankind would have been to imperil his sanity. If he had gone through the excitement of a Methodist conversion, he would probably have ended his days in a madhouse.

Such considerations, however, were not, one may guess, distinctly present to Johnson himself; and the offer of a college fellowship or of private patronage might probably have altered his career. He might have become a learned recluse or a struggling Parson Adams. College fellowships were less open to talent then than now, and patrons were never too propitious to the uncouth giant, who had to force his way by sheer labour, and fight for his own hand. Accordingly, the young scholar tried to coin his brains into money by the most depressing and least hopeful of employments. By becoming an usher in a school, he could at least turn his talents to account with little delay, and that was the most pressing consideration. By one schoolmaster he was rejected on the ground that his infirmities would excite the ridicule of the boys. Under another he passed some months of "complicated misery," and could never think of the school without horror and aversion. Finding this situation intolerable, he settled in Birmingham, in 1733.

to be near an old schoolfellow, named Hæctor, who was apparently beginning to practise as a surgeon. Johnson seems to have had some acquaintances among the comfortable families in the neighbourhood ; but his means of living are obscure. Some small literary work came in his way. He contributed essays to a local paper, and translated a book of Travels in Abyssinia. For this, his first publication, he received five guineas. In 1734 he made certain overtures to Cave, a London publisher, of the result of which I shall have to speak presently. For the present it is pretty clear that the great problem of self-support had been very inadequately solved.

Having no money and no prospects, Johnson naturally married. The attractions of the lady were not very manifest to others than her husband. She was the widow of a Birmingham mercer named Porter. Her age at the time (1735) of the second marriage was forty-eight, the bridegroom being not quite twenty-six. The biographer's eye was not fixed upon Johnson till after his wife's death, and we have little in the way of authentic description of her person and character. Garrick, who had known her, said that she was very fat, with cheeks coloured both by paint and cordials, flimsy and fantastic in dress and affected in her manners. She is said to have treated her husband with some contempt, adopting the airs of an antiquated beauty, which he returned by elaborate deference. Garrick used his wonderful powers of mimicry to make fun of the uncouth caresses of the husband, and the courtly Beaulere used to provoke the smiles of his audience by repeating Johnson's assertion that "it was a love-match on both sides." One incident of the wedding-day was ominous. As the newly-married couple rode back from church, Mrs. Johnson showed her

spirit by reproaching her husband for riding too fast, and then for lagging behind. Resolved "not to be made the slave of caprice," he pushed on briskly till he was fairly out of sight. When she rejoined him, as he, of course, took care that she should soon do, she was in tears. Mrs. Johnson apparently knew how to regain supremacy; but, at any rate, Johnson loved her devotedly during life, and clung to her memory during a widowhood of more than thirty years, as fondly as if they had been the most pattern hero and heroine of romantic fiction.

Whatever Mrs. Johnson's charms, she seems to have been a woman of good sense and some literary judgment. Johnson's grotesque appearance did not prevent her from saying to her daughter on their first introduction, "This is the most sensible man I ever met." Her praises were, we may believe, sweeter to him than those of the severest critics, or the most fervent of personal flatterers. Like all good men, Johnson loved good women, and liked to have on hand a flirtation or two, as warm as might be within the bounds of due decorum. But nothing affected his fidelity to his Letty or displaced her image in his mind. He remembered her in many solemn prayers, and such words as "this was dear Letty's book:" or, "this was a prayer which dear Letty was accustomed to say," were found written by him in many of her books of devotion.

Mrs. Johnson had one other recommendation—a fortune, namely, of £800—little enough, even then, as a provision for the support of the married pair, but enough to help Johnson to make a fresh start. In 1736, there appeared an advertisement in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages by Samuel Johnson." If, as seems probable, Mrs. Johnson's

money supplied the funds for this venture, it was an unlucky speculation.

Johnson was not fitted to be a pedagogue. Success in that profession implies skill in the management of pupils, but perhaps still more decidedly in the management of parents. Johnson had little qualifications in either way. As a teacher he would probably have been alternately despotic and over-indulgent; and, on the other hand, at a single glance the rough Dominie Sampson would be enough to frighten the ordinary parent off his premises. Very few pupils came, and they seem to have profited little, if a story as told of two of his pupils refers to this time. After some months of instruction in English history, he asked them who had destroyed the monasteries? One of them gave no answer; the other replied "Jesus Christ." Johnson, however, could boast of one eminent pupil in David Garrick, though, by Garrick's account, his master was of little service except as affording an excellent mark for his early powers of ridicule. The school, or "academy," failed after a year and a half; and Johnson, once more at a loss for employment, resolved to try the great experiment, made so often and so often unsuccessfully. He left Lichfield to seek his fortune in London. Garrick accompanied him, and the two brought a common letter of introduction to the master of an academy from Gilbert Walmsley, registrar of the Prerogative Court in Lichfield. Long afterwards Johnson took an opportunity in the *Lives of the Poets*, of expressing his warm regard for the memory of his early friend, to whom he had been recommended by a community of literary tastes, in spite of party differences and great inequality of age. Walmsley says in his letter, that "one Johnson" is about to accompany Garrick to London, in order to try his fate with a tragedy and get himself em-

played in translation. Johnson, he adds, "is a very good scholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy writer."

The letter is dated March 2nd, 1737. Before recording what is known of his early career thus started, it will be well to take a glance at the general condition of the profession of Literature in England at this period.

CHAPTER II.

LITERARY CAREER.

"No man but a blockhead," said Johnson, "ever wrote except for money." The doctrine is, of course, perfectly outrageous, and specially calculated to shock people who like to keep it for their private use, instead of proclaiming it in public. But it is a good expression of that huge contempt for the foppery of high-flown sentiment which, as is not uncommon with Johnson, passes into something which would be cynical if it were not half-humorous. In this case it implies also the contempt of the professional for the amateur. Johnson despised gentlemen who dabbled in his craft, as a man whose life is devoted to music or painting despises the ladies and gentlemen who treat those arts as fashionable accomplishments. An author was, according to him, a man who turned out books as a brick-layer turns out houses or a tailor coats. So long as he supplied a good article and got a fair price, he was a fool to grumble, and a humbug to affect loftier motives.

Johnson was not the first professional author, in this sense, but perhaps the first man who made the profession respectable. The principal habitat of authors, in his age, was Grub Street—a region which, in later years, has ceased to be ashamed of itself, and has adopted the more pretentious

name Bohemia. The original Grub Street, it is said, first became associated with authorship during the increase of pamphlet literature, produced by the civil wars. Fox, the martyrologist, was one of its original inhabitants. Another of its heroes was a certain Mr. Welby, of whom the sole record is, that he "lived there forty years without being seen of any." In fact, it was a region of holes and corners, calculated to illustrate that great advantage of London life, which a friend of Boswell's described by saying, that a man could there be always "close to his burrow." The "burrow" which received the luckless wight, was indeed no pleasant refuge. Since poor Green, in the earliest generation of dramatists, bought his "groat'sworth of wit with a million of repentance," too many of his brethren had trodden the path which led to hopeless misery or death in a tavern brawl. The history of men who had to support themselves by their pens, is a record of almost universal gloom. The names of Spenser, of Butler, and of Otway, are enough to remind us that even warm contemporary recognition was not enough to raise an author above the fear of dying in want of necessities. The two great dictators of literature, Ben Jonson in the earlier and Dryden in the later part of the century, only kept their heads above water by help of the laureate's pitance, though reckless imprudence, encouraged by the precarious life, was the cause of much of their sufferings. Patronage gave but a fitful resource, and the author could hope at most but an occasional crust, flung to him from better provided tables.

In the happy days of Queen Anne, it is true, there had been a gleam of prosperity. Many authors, Addison, Congreve, Swift, and others of less name, had won by their pens not only temporary profits but permanent

places. The class which came into power at the Revolution was willing for a time, to share some of the public patronage with men distinguished for intellectual eminence. Patronage was liberal when the funds came out of other men's pockets. But, as the system of party government developed, it soon became evident that this involved a waste of power. There were enough political partisans to absorb all the comfortable sinecures to be had; and such money as was still spent upon literature, was given in return for services equally degrading to giver and receiver. Nor did the patronage of literature reach the poor inhabitants of Grub Street. Addison's poetical power might suggest or justify the gift of a place from his elegant friends; but a man like De Foe, who really looked to his pen for great part of his daily subsistence, was below the region of such prizes, and was obliged in later years not only to write inferior books for money, but to sell himself and act as a spy upon his fellows. One great man, it is true, made an independence by literature. Pope received some £8000 for his translation of Homer, by the then popular mode of subscription—a kind of compromise between the systems of patronage and public support. But his success caused little pleasure in Grub Street. No love was lost between the poet and the dwellers in this dismal region. Pope was its deadliest enemy, and carried on an internecine warfare with its inmates, which has enriched our language with a great satire, but which wasted his powers upon low objects, and tempted him into disgraceful artifices. The life of the unfortunate victims, pilloried in the *Dunciad* and accused of the unpardonable sins of poverty and dependence, was too often one which might have extorted sympathy even from a thin-skinned poet and critic.

Illustrations of the manners and customs of that Grub

Street of which Johnson was to become an inmate are only too abundant. The best writers of the day could tell of hardships endured in that dismal region. Richardson went on the sound principle of keeping his shop that his shop might keep him. But the other great novelists of the century have painted from life the miseries of an author's existence. Fielding, Smollett, and Goldsmith have described the poor wretches with a vivid force which gives sadness to the reflection that each of those great men was drawing upon his own experience, and that they each died in distress. The *Case of Authors by Profession* to quote the title of a pamphlet by Ralph, was indeed a wretched one, when the greatest of their number had an incessant struggle to keep the wolf from the door. The life of an author resembled the proverbial existence of the flying-fish, chased by enemies in sea and in air; he only escaped from the slavery of the bookseller's garret, to fly from the bailiff or rot in the debtor's ward or the spunging-house. Many strange half-pathetic and half-ludicrous anecdotes survive to recall the sorrows and the recklessness of the luckless scribblers who, like one of Johnson's acquaintance, "lived in London and hung loose upon society."

There was Samuel Boyse, for example, whose poem on the *Deity* is quoted with high praise by Fielding. Once Johnson had generously exerted himself for his comrade in misery, and collected enough money by sixpences to get the poet's clothes out of pawn. Two days afterwards, Boyse had spent the money and was found in bed, covered only with a blanket, through two holes in which he passed his arms to write. Boyse, it appears, when still in this position would lay out his last half-guinea to buy truffles and mushrooms for his last scrap of beef. Of another scribbler Johnson said, "I honour Derrick for his strength of mind.

One night when Floyd (another poor author) was wandering about the streets at night, he found Derrick fast asleep upon a bulk. Upon being suddenly awaked, Derrick started up; 'My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state; will you go home with me to my *lodgings?*' " Authors in such circumstances might be forced into such a wonderful contract as that which is reported to have been drawn up by one Gardner with Rolt and Christopher Smart. They were to write a monthly miscellany, sold at sixpence, and to have a third of the profits; but they were to write nothing else, and the contract was to last for ninety-nine years. Johnson himself summed up the trade upon earth by the lines in which Virgil describes the entrance to hell; thus translated by Dryden:—

Just in the gate and in the jaws of hell,
Revengeful cares and sullen sorrows dwell.
And pale diseases and repining age,
Want, fear, and famine's unresisted rage:
Here toils and Death and Death's half-brother, Sleep—
Forms, terrible to view, their sentry keep.

"Now," said Johnson, "almost all these apply exactly to an author; these are the concomitants of a printing-house."

Judicious authors, indeed, were learning how to make literature pay. Some of them belonged to the class who understood the great truth that the scissors are a very superior implement to the pen considered as a tool of literary trade. Such, for example, was that respectable Dr. John Campbell, whose parties Johnson ceased to frequent lest Scotchmen should say of any good bits of work, "Ay, ay, he has learnt this of Cawmell." Campbell, he said quaintly, was a good man, a pious man. "I am afraid he

has not been in the inside of a church for many years ; but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat. This shows he has good principles,"—of which in fact there seems to be some less questionable evidence. Campbell supported himself by writings chiefly of the Encyclopedia or Gazetteer kind ; and became, still in Johnson's phrase, "the richest author that ever grazed the common of literature." A more singular and less reputable character was that impudent quack, Sir John Hill, who, with his insolent attacks upon the Royal Society, pretentious botanical and medical compilations, plays, novels, and magazine articles, has long sunk into utter oblivion. It is said of him that he pursued every branch of literary quackery with greater contempt of character than any man of his time, and that he made as much as £1500 in a year ;—three times as much, it is added, as any one writer ever made in the same period.

The political scribblers—the Arnalls, Gordons, Trenchards, Guthries, Ralphs, and Amhersts, whose names meet us in the notes to the *Dunciad* and in contemporary pamphlets and newspapers—form another variety of the class. Their general character may be estimated from Johnson's classification of the "Scribbler for a Party" with the "Commissioner of Excise," as the "two lowest of all human beings." "Ralph," says one of the notes to the *Dunciad*, "ended in the common sink of all such writers, a political newspaper." The prejudice against such employment has scarcely died out in our own day, and may be still traced in the account of Pendennis and his friend Warrington. People who do dirty work must be paid for it ; and the Secret Committee which inquired into Walpole's administration reported that in ten years, from 1731 to 1741, a sum of £50,077 18s. had been paid to writers

and printers of newspapers. Arnall, now remembered chiefly by Pope's line,—

Spirit of Arnall, aid me whilst I lie!

had received, in four years, £10,997 6s. 8d. of this amount. The more successful writers might look to pensions or preferment. Francis, for example, the translator of Horace, and the father, in all probability, of the most formidable of the whole tribe of such literary gladiators, received, it is said, 900*l.* a year for his work, besides being appointed to a rectory and the chaplaincy of Chelsea.

It must, moreover, be observed that the price of literary work was rising during the century, and that, in the latter half, considerable sums were received by successful writers. Religious as well as dramatic literature had begun to be commercially valuable. Baxter, in the previous century, made from 60*l.* to 80*l.* a year by his pen. The copyright of Tillotson's *Sermons* was sold, it is said, upon his death for £2500. Considerable sums were made by the plan of publishing by subscription. It is said that 4600 people subscribed to the two posthumous volumes of Conybeare's *Sermons*. A few poets trod in Pope's steps. Young made more than £3000 for the Satires called the *Universal Passion*, published, I think, on the same plan; and the Duke of Wharton is said, though the report is doubtful, to have given him £2000 for the same work. Gay made £1000 by his *Poems*; £400 for the copyright of the *Beggar's Opera*, and three times as much for its second part, *Polly*. Among historians, Hume seems to have received £700 a volume; Smollett made £2000 by his catchpenny rival publication; Henry made £3300 by his history; and Robertson, after the booksellers had made £6000 by his *History of Scotland*, sold his *Charles V.* for £4500.

Amongst the novelists, Foelding received £700 for *Tom Jones* and £1000 for *Amelia*; Sterne, for the second edition of the first part of *Tristram Shandy* and for two additional volumes, received £650; besides which Lord Fauconberg gave him a living (most inappropriate acknowledgment, one would say!), and Warburton a purse of gold. Goldsmith received 60 guineas for the immortal *Vicar*, a fair price, according to Johnson, for a work by a then unknown author. By each of his plays he made about £500, and for the eight volumes of his *Natural History* he received 800 guineas. Towards the end of the century, Mrs. Radcliffe got £500 for the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and £800 for her last work, the *Italian*. Perhaps the largest sum given for a single book was £6000 paid to Hawkesworth for his account of the South Sea Expeditions. Horne Tooke received from £4000 to £5000 for the *Diversions of Purley*; and it is added by his biographer, though it seems to be incredible, that Hayley received no less than £11,000 for the *Life of Cowper*. This was, of course, in the present century, when we are already approaching the period of Scott and Byron.

Such sums prove that some few authors might achieve independence by a successful work; and it is well to remember them in considering Johnson's life from the business point of view. Though he never grumbled at the booksellers, and on the contrary, was always ready to defend them as liberal men, he certainly failed, whether from carelessness or want of skill, to turn them to as much profit as many less celebrated rivals. Meanwhile, pecuniary success of this kind was beyond any reasonable hopes. A man who has to work like his own dependent Levett, and to make the "modest toil of every day" supply "the wants of every day," must discount his talents until he

can secure leisure for some more sustained effort. Johnson, coming up from the country to seek for work, could have but a slender prospect of rising above the ordinary level of his Grub Street companions and rivals. One publisher to whom he applied suggested to him that it would be his wisest course to buy a porter's knot and carry trunks; and, in the struggle which followed, Johnson must sometimes have been tempted to regret that the advice was not taken.

The details of the ordeal through which he was now to pass have naturally vanished. Johnson, long afterwards, burst into tears on recalling the trials of this period. But, at the time, no one was interested in noting the history of an obscure literary drudge, and it has not been described by the sufferer himself. What we know is derived from a few letters and incidental references of Johnson in later days. On first arriving in London he was almost destitute, and had to join with Garrick in raising a loan of five pounds, which, we are glad to say, was repaid. He dined for eightpence at an ordinary: a cut of meat for sixpence, bread for a penny, and a penny to the waiter, making out the charge. One of his acquaintance had told him that a man might live in London for thirty pounds a year. Ten pounds would pay for clothes; a garret might be hired for eighteen-pence a week; if any one asked for an address, it was easy to reply, "I am to be found at such a place." Threepence laid out at a coffee-house would enable him to pass some hours a day in good company; dinner might be had for sixpence, a bread-and-milk breakfast for a penny, and supper was superfluous. On clean shirt day you might go abroad and pay visits. This leaves a surplus of nearly one pound from the thirty.

Johnson, however, had a wife to support; and to raise funds for even so ascetic a mode of existence required steady labour. Often, it seems, his purse was at the very lowest ebb. One of his letters to his employer is signed *impransus*; and whether or not the dinnerless condition was in this case accidental, or significant of absolute impecuniosity, the less pleasant interpretation is not improbable. He would walk the streets all night with his friend, Savage, when their combined funds could not pay for a lodging. One night, as he told Sir Joshua Reynolds in later years, they thus perambulated St. James's Square, warming themselves by declaiming against Walpole, and nobly resolved that they would stand by their country.

Patriotic enthusiasm, however, as no one knew better than Johnson, is a poor substitute for bed and supper. Johnson suffered acutely and made some attempts to escape from his misery. To the end of his life, he was grateful to those who had lent him a helping hand. "Harry Hervey," he said of one of them shortly before his death, "was a vicious man, but very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him." Pope was impressed by the excellence of his first poem, *London*, and induced Lord Gower to write to a friend to beg Swift to obtain a degree for Johnson from the University of Dublin. The terms of this circuitous application, curious, as bringing into connexion three of the most eminent men of letters of the day, prove that the youngest of them was at the time (1739) in deep distress. The object of the degree was to qualify Johnson for a mastership of £60 a year, which would make him happy for life. He would rather, said Lord Gower, die upon the road to Dublin if an examination were necessary, "than be starved to death in translating for booksellers, which has been his

only subsistence for some time past." The application failed, however, and the want of a degree was equally fatal to another application to be admitted to practise at Doctor's Commons.

Literature was thus perforce Johnson's sole support; and by literature was meant, for the most part, drudgery of the kind indicated by the phrase, "translating for booksellers." While still in Lichfield, Johnson had, as I have said, written to Cave, proposing to become a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The letter was one of those which a modern editor receives by the dozen, and answers as perfunctorily as his conscience will allow. It seems, however, to have made some impression upon Cave, and possibly led to Johnson's employment by him on his first arrival in London. From 1738 he was employed both on the Magazine and in some jobs of translation.

Edward Cave, to whom we are thus introduced, was a man of some mark in the history of literature. Johnson always spoke of him with affection and afterwards wrote his life in complimentary terms. Cave, though a clumsy, phlegmatic person of little cultivation, seems to have been one of those men who, whilst destitute of real critical powers, have a certain instinct for recognizing the commercial value of literary wares. He had become by this time well-known as the publisher of a magazine which survives to this day. Journals containing summaries of passing events had already been started. Boyer's *Political State of Great Britain* began in 1711. *The Historical Register*, which added to a chronicle some literary notices, was started in 1716. *The Grub Street Journal* was another journal with fuller critical notices, which first appeared in 1730; and these two seem to have been superseded by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, started by Cave in the next year.

Johnson saw in it an opening for the employment of his literary talents ; and regarded its contributions with that awe so natural in youthful aspirants, and at once so comic and pathetic to writers of a little experience. The names of many of Cave's staff are preserved in a note to Hawkins. One or two of them, such as Birch and Akenside, have still a certain interest for students of literature ; but few have heard of the great Moses Browne, who was regarded as the great poetical light of the magazine. Johnson looked up to him as a leader in his craft, and was graciously taken by Cave to an alehouse in Clerkenwell, where, wrapped in a horseman's coat, and "a great bushy uncombed wig," he saw Mr. Browne sitting at the end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, and felt the satisfaction of a true hero-worshipper.

It is needless to describe in detail the literary task-work done by Johnson at this period, the Latin poems which he contributed in praise of Cave, and of Cave's friends, or the Jacobite squibs by which he relieved his anti-ministerialist feelings. One incident of the period doubtless refreshed the soul of many authors, who have shared Campbell's gratitude to Napoleon for the sole redeeming action of his life—the shooting of a bookseller. Johnson was employed by Osborne, a rough specimen of the trade, to make a catalogue of the Harleian Library. Osborne offensively reproved him for negligence, and Johnson knocked him down with a folio. The book with which the feat was performed (*Biblia Græca Septuaginta*, fol. 1594, Frankfort) was in existence in a bookseller's shop at Cambridge in 1812, and should surely have been placed in some safe author's museum.

The most remarkable of Johnson's performances as a hack writer deserves a brief notice. He was one of the

first of reporters. Cave published such reports of the debates in Parliament as were then allowed by the jealousy of the Legislature, under the title of *The Senate of Lilliput*. Johnson was the author of the debates from Nov. 1740 to February 1742. Persons were employed to attend in the two Houses, who brought home notes of the speeches, which were then put into shape by Johnson. Long afterwards, at a dinner at Foote's, Francis (the father of Junius) mentioned a speech of Pitt's as the best he had ever read, and superior to anything in Demosthenes. Hereupon Johnson replied, "I wrote that speech in a garret in Exeter Street." When the company applauded not only his eloquence but his impartiality, Johnson replied, "That is not quite true; I saved appearances tolerably well, but I took care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it." The speeches passed for a time as accurate; though, in truth, it has been proved and it is easy to observe, that they are, in fact, very vague reflections of the original. The editors of Chesterfield's Works published two of the speeches, and, to Johnson's considerable amusement, declared that one of them resembled Demosthenes and the other Cicero. It is plain enough to the modern reader that, if so, both of the ancient orators must have written true Johnsonese; and, in fact, the style of the true author is often as plainly marked in many of these compositions as in the *Rambler* or *Rasselas*. For this deception, such as it was, Johnson expressed penitence at the end of his life, though he said that he had ceased to write when he found that they were taken as genuine. He would not be "accessory to the propagation of falsehood."

Another of Johnson's works which appeared in 1744 requires notice both for its intrinsic merit, and its auto-

biographical interest. The most remarkable of his Grub-Street companions was the Richard Savage already mentioned. Johnson's life of him written soon after his death is one of his most forcible performances, and the best extant illustration of the life of the struggling authors of the time. Savage claimed to be the illegitimate son of the Countess of Macclesfield, who was divorced from her husband in the year of his birth on account of her connexion with his supposed father, Lord Rivers. According to the story, believed by Johnson, and published without her contradiction in the mother's lifetime, she not only disavowed her son, but cherished an unnatural hatred for him. She told his father that he was dead, in order that he might not be benefited by the father's will; she tried to have him kidnapped and sent to the plantations; and she did her best to prevent him from receiving a pardon when he had been sentenced to death for killing a man in a tavern brawl. However this may be, and there are reasons for doubt, the story was generally believed, and caused much sympathy for the supposed victim. Savage was at one time protected by the kindness of Steele, who published his story, and sometimes employed him as a literary assistant. When Steele became disgusted with him, he received generous help from the actor Wilks and from Mrs. Oldfield, to whom he had been introduced by some dramatic efforts. Then he was taken up by Lord Tyrconnel, but abandoned by him after a violent quarrel; he afterwards called himself a volunteer laureate, and received a pension of 50*l.* a year from Queen Caroline; on her death he was thrown into deep distress, and helped by a subscription to which Pope was the chief contributor, on condition of retiring to the country. Ultimately he quarrelled with his last protectors, and ended by dying in a debtor's prison.

Various poetical works, now utterly forgotten, obtained for him scanty profit. This career sufficiently reveals the character. Savage belonged to the very common type of men, who seem to employ their whole talents to throw away their chances in life, and to disgust every one who offers them a helping hand. He was, however, a man of some talent, though his poems are now hopelessly unreadable, and seems to have had a singular attraction for Johnson. The biography is curiously marked by Johnson's constant effort to put the best face upon faults, which he has too much love of truth to conceal. The explanation is, partly, that Johnson conceived himself to be avenging a victim of cruel oppression. "This mother," he says, after recording her vindictiveness, "is still alive, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was often defeated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting that the life, which she often endeavoured to destroy, was at last shortened by her maternal offices; that though he could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanic, or hasten the hand of the public executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of embittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death."

But it is also probable that Savage had a strong influence upon Johnson's mind at a very impressible part of his career. The young man, still ignorant of life and full of reverent enthusiasm for the literary magnates of his time, was impressed by the varied experience of his companion, and, it may be, flattered by his intimacy. Savage, he says admiringly, had enjoyed great opportunities of seeing the most conspicuous men of the day in their private life. He was shrewd and inquisitive enough to use his opportunities well. "More circumstances to constitute a critic on human life could not easily concur." The only phrase which survives

to justify this remark is Savage's statement about Walpole, that "the whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politics, and from politics to obscenity." We may, however, guess what was the special charm of the intercourse to Johnson. Savage was an expert in that science of human nature, learnt from experience not from books, upon which Johnson set so high a value, and of which he was destined to become the authorized expositor. There were, moreover, resemblances between the two men. They were both admired and sought out for their conversational powers. Savage, indeed, seems to have lived chiefly by the people who entertained him for talk, till he had disgusted them by his insolence and his utter disregard of time and propriety. He would, like Johnson, sit up talking beyond midnight, and next day decline to rise till dinner-time, though his favourite drink was not, like Johnson's, free from intoxicating properties. Both of them had a lofty pride, which Johnson heartily commends in Savage, though he has difficulty in palliating some of its manifestations. One of the stories reminds us of an anecdote already related of Johnson himself. Some clothes had been left for Savage at a coffeehouse by a person who, out of delicacy, concealed his name. Savage, however, resented some want of ceremony, and refused to enter the house again till the clothes had been removed.

What was honourable pride in Johnson was, indeed, simple arrogance in Savage. He asked favours, his biographer says, without submission, and resented refusal as an insult. He had too much pride to acknowledge, not too much to receive, obligations; enough to quarrel with his charitable benefactors, but not enough to make him rise to independence of their charity. His pension would have sufficed to keep him, only that as soon as he received it he

retired from the sight of all his acquaintance, and came back before long as penniless as before. This conduct, observes his biographer, was "very particular." It was hardly so singular as objectionable; and we are not surprised to be told that he was rather a "friend of goodness" than himself a good man. In short, we may say of him as Beauclerk said of a friend of Boswell's that, if he had excellent principles, he did not wear them out in practice.

There is something quaint about this picture of a thorough-paced scamp, admiringly painted by a virtuous man; forced, in spite of himself, to make it a likeness, and striving in vain to make it attractive. But it is also pathetic when we remember that Johnson shared some part at least of his hero's miseries. "On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-house, among thieves and beggars, was to be found the author of *The Wanderer*, the man of exalted sentiments, extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist, whose eloquence might have influenced senators, and whose delicacy might have polished courts." Very shocking, no doubt, and yet hardly surprising under the circumstances! To us it is more interesting to remember that the author of the *Rambler* was not only a sympathizer, but a fellow-sufferer with the author of the *Wanderer*, and shared the queer "lodgings" of his friend, as Floyd shared the lodgings of Derrick. Johnson happily came unscathed through the ordeal which was too much for poor Savage, and could boast with perfect truth in later life that "no man, who ever lived by literature, had lived more independently than I have done." It was in so strange a school, and under such questionable teaching that Johnson formed his character of the world and of the con-

duct befitting its inmates. One characteristic conclusion is indicated in the opening passage of the life. It has always been observed, he says, that men eminent by nature or fortune are not generally happy: "whether it be that apparent superiority incites great designs, and great designs are naturally liable to fatal miscarriages; or that the general lot of mankind is misery, and the misfortunes of those, whose eminence drew upon them an universal attention, have been more carefully recorded because they were more generally observed, and have in reality been only more conspicuous than those of others, not more frequent or more severe."

The last explanation was that which really commended itself to Johnson. Nobody had better reason to know that obscurity might conceal a misery as bitter as any that fell to the lot of the most eminent. The gloom due to his constitutional temperament was intensified by the sense that he and his wife were dependent upon the goodwill of a narrow and ignorant tradesman for the scantiest maintenance. How was he to reach some solid standing-ground above the hopeless mire of Grub Street? As a journeyman author he could make both ends meet, but only on condition of incessant labour. Illness and misfortune would mean constant dependence upon charity or bondage to creditors. To get ahead of the world it was necessary to distinguish himself in some way from the herd of needy competitors. He had come up from Lichfield with a play in his pocket, but the play did not seem at present to have much chance of emerging. Meanwhile he published a poem which did something to give him a general reputation.

London—an imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal—was published in May, 1738. The plan was doubtless suggested by Pope's imitations of Horace, which had

recently appeared. Though necessarily following the lines of Juvenal's poem, and conforming to the conventional fashion of the time, both in sentiment and versification, the poem has a biographical significance. It is indeed odd to find Johnson, who afterwards thought of London as a lover of his mistress, and who despised nothing more heartily than the cant of Rousseau and the sentimentalists, adopting in this poem the ordinary denunciations of the corruption of towns, and singing the praises of an innocent country life. Doubtless, the young writer was like other young men, taking up a strain still imitative and artificial. He has a quiet smile at Savage in the life, because in his retreat to Wales, that enthusiast declared that he "could not debar himself from the happiness which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or lose the opportunity of listening without intermission to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happiness of a country life." In *London*, this insincere cockney adopts Savage's view. Thales, who is generally supposed to represent Savage (and this coincidence seems to confirm the opinion), is to retire "from the dungeons of the Strand," and to end a healthy life in pruning walks and twining bowers in his garden.

There every bush with nature's music rings,
There every breeze bears health upon its wings.

Johnson had not yet learnt the value of perfect sincerity even in poetry. But it must also be admitted that London, as seen by the poor drudge from a Grub Street garret, probably presented a prospect gloomy enough to make even Johnson long at times for rural solitude. The poem reflects, too, the ordinary talk of the heterogeneous band of patriots,

Jacobites, and disappointed Whigs, who were beginning to gather enough strength to threaten Walpole's long tenure of power. Many references to contemporary politics illustrate Johnson's sympathy with the inhabitants of the contemporary Cave of Adullam.

This poem, as already stated, attracted Pope's notice, who made a curious note on a scrap of paper sent with it to a friend. Johnson is described as "a man afflicted with an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes so as to make him a sad spectacle." This seems to have been the chief information obtained by Pope about the anonymous author, of whom he had said, on first reading the poem, this man will soon be *déterré*. *London* made a certain noise; it reached a second edition in a week, and attracted various patrons, among others, General Oglethorpe, celebrated by Pope, and through a long life the warm friend of Johnson. One line, however, in the poem printed in capital letters, gives the moral which was doubtless most deeply felt by the author, and which did not lose its meaning in the years to come. This mournful truth, he says,—

Is everywhere confess'd,
Slow rises worth by poverty depress'd.

Ten years later (in January, 1749) appeared the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, an imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. The difference in tone shows how deeply this and similar truths had been impressed upon its author in the interval. Though still an imitation, it is as significant as the most original work could be of Johnson's settled views of life. It was written at a white heat, as indeed Johnson wrote all his best work. Its strong Stoical morality, its profound and melancholy illustrations of the old and ever new sen-

timent, *Vanitas Vanitatum*, make it perhaps the most impressive poem of the kind in the language. The lines on the scholar's fate show that the iron had entered his soul in the interval. Should the scholar succeed beyond expectation in his labours and escape melancholy and disease, yet, he says,—

Yet hope not life from grief and danger free,
Nor think the doom of man reversed on thee ;
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes
And pause awhile from letters, to be wise ;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron and the jail ;
See nations, slowly wise and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, once again attend.
Hear Lydiat's life and Galileo's end.

For the "patron," Johnson had originally written the "garret." The change was made after an experience of patronage to be presently described in connexion with the *Dictionary*.

For *London* Johnson received ten guineas, and for the *Vanity of Human Wishes* fifteen. Though indirectly valuable, as increasing his reputation, such work was not very profitable. The most promising career in a pecuniary sense was still to be found on the stage. Novelists were not yet the rivals of dramatists, and many authors had made enough by a successful play to float them through a year or two. Johnson had probably been determined by his knowledge of this fact to write the tragedy of *Irene*. No other excuse at least can be given for the composition of one of the heaviest and most unreadable of dramatic performances, interesting now, if interesting at all, solely as a curious example of the result of bestowing great powers upon a totally uncongenial task. Young men,

however, may be pardoned for such blunders if they are not repeated, and Johnson, though he seems to have retained a fondness for his unlucky performance, never indulged in playwriting after leaving Lichfield. The best thing connected with the play was Johnson's retort to his friend Walmsley, the Lichfield registrar. "How," asked Walmsley, "can you contrive to plunge your heroine into deeper calamity?" "Sir," said Johnson, "I can put her into the spiritual court." Even Boswell can only say for *Irene* that it is "entitled to the praise of superior excellence," and admits its entire absence of dramatic power. Garrick, who had become manager of Drury Lane, produced his friend's work in 1749. The play was carried through nine nights by Garrick's friendly zeal, so that the author had his three nights' profits. For this he received £195 17s. and for the copy he had £100. People probably attended, as they attend modern representations of legitimate drama, rather from a sense of duty, than in the hope of pleasure. The heroine originally had to speak two lines with a bowstring round her neck. The situation produced cries of murder, and she had to go off the stage alive. The objectionable passage was removed, but *Irene* was on the whole a failure, and has never, I imagine, made another appearance. When asked how he felt upon his ill-success, he replied "like the monument," and indeed he made it a principle throughout life to accept the decision of the public like a sensible man without murmurs.

Meanwhile, Johnson was already embarked upon an undertaking of a very different kind. In 1747 he had put forth a plan for an English Dictionary, addressed at the suggestion of Dodsley, to Lord Chesterfield, then Secretary of State, and the great contemporary Mæcenas. Johnson had apparently been maturing the scheme for

some time. "I know," he says in the "plan," that "the work in which I engaged is generally considered as drudgery for the blind, as the proper toil of artless industry, a book that requires neither the light of learning nor the activity of genius, but may be successfully performed without any higher quality than that of bearing burdens with dull patience, and beating the track of the alphabet with sluggish resolution." He adds in a subsarcastic tone, that although princes and statesmen had once thought it honourable to patronize dictionaries, he had considered such benevolent acts to be "prodigies, recorded rather to raise wonder than expectation," and he was accordingly pleased and surprised to find that Chesterfield took an interest in his undertaking. He proceeds to lay down the general principles upon which he intends to frame his work, in order to invite timely suggestions and repress unreasonable expectations. At this time, humble as his aspirations might be, he took a view of the possibilities open to him which had to be lowered before the publication of the dictionary. He shared the illusion that a language might be "fixed" by making a catalogue of its words. In the preface which appeared with the completed work, he explains very sensibly the vanity of any such expectation. Whilst all human affairs are changing, it is, as he says, absurd to imagine that the language which repeats all human thoughts and feelings can remain unaltered.

A dictionary, as Johnson conceived it, was in fact work for a "harmless drudge," the definition of a lexicographer given in the book itself. Etymology in a scientific sense was as yet non-existent, and Johnson was not in this respect ahead of his contemporaries. To collect all the words in the language, to define their meanings as accurately as

might be, to give the obvious or whimsical guesses at Etymology suggested by previous writers, and to append a good collection of illustrative passages was the sum of his ambition. Any systematic training of the historical processes by which a particular language had been developed was unknown, and of course the result could not be anticipated. The work, indeed, required a keen logical faculty of definition, and wide reading of the English literature of the two preceding centuries; but it could of course give no play either for the higher literary faculties on points of scientific investigation. A dictionary in Johnson's sense was the highest kind of work to which a literary journeyman could be set, but it was still work for a journeyman, not for an artist. He was not adding to literature, but providing a useful implement for future men of letters.

Johnson had thus got on hand the biggest job that could be well undertaken by a good workman in his humble craft. He was to receive fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds for the whole, and he expected to finish it in three years. The money, it is to be observed, was to satisfy not only Johnson but several copyists employed in the mechanical part of the work. It was advanced by instalments, and came to an end before the conclusion of the book. Indeed, it appeared when accounts were settled, that he had received a hundred pounds more than was due. He could, however, pay his way for the time, and would gain a reputation enough to ensure work in future. The period of extreme poverty had probably ended when Johnson got permanent employment on the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He was not elevated above the need of drudgery and economy, but he might at least be free from the dread of neglect. He could

command his market—such as it was. 'The necessity of steady labour was probably unfelt in repelling his fits of melancholy. His name was beginning to be known, and men of reputation were seeking his acquaintance. In the winter of 1749 he formed a club, which met weekly at a "famous beef-steak house" in Ivy Lane. Among its members were Hawkins, afterwards his biographer, and two friends, Bathurst a physician, and Hawkesworth an author, for the first of whom he entertained an unusually strong affection. The Club, like its more famous successor, gave Johnson an opportunity of displaying and improving his great conversational powers. He was already dreaded for his prowess in argument, his dictatorial manners and vivid flashes of wit and humour, the more effective from the habitual gloom and apparent heaviness of the discourser.

The talk of this society probably suggested topics for the *Rambler*, which appeared at this time, and caused Johnson's fame to spread further beyond the literary circles of London. The wit and humour have, indeed, left few traces upon its ponderous pages, for the *Rambler* marks the culminating period of Johnson's worst qualities of style. The pompous and involved language seems indeed to be a fit clothing for the melancholy reflections which are its chief staple, and in spite of its unmistakable power it is as heavy reading as the heavy class of lay-sermonizing to which it belongs. Such literature, however, is often strangely popular in England, and the *Rambler*, though its circulation was limited, gave to Johnson his position as a great practical moralist. He took his literary title one may say, from the *Rambler*, as the more familiar title was derived from the *Dictionary*.

The *Rambler* was published twice a week from March

20th, 1750, to March 14th, 1752. In five numbers alone he received assistance from friends, and one of these, written by Richardson, is said to have been the only number which had a large sale. The circulation rarely exceeded 500, though ten English editions were published in the author's lifetime, besides Scotch and Irish editions. The payment, however, namely, two guineas a number, must have been welcome to Johnson, and the friendship of many distinguished men of the time was a still more valuable reward. A quaint story illustrates the hero-worship of which Johnson now became the object. Dr. Burney, afterwards an intimate friend, had introduced himself to Johnson by letter in consequence of the *Rambler*, and the plan of the *Dictionary*. The admiration was shared by a friend of Burney's, a Mr. Bewley, known—in Norfolk at least—as the “philosopher of Massingham.” When Burney at last gained the honour of a personal interview, he wished to procure some “relic” of Johnson for his friend. He cut off some bristles from a hearth-broom in the doctor's chambers, and sent them in a letter to his fellow-enthusiast. Long afterwards Johnson was pleased to hear of this simple-minded homage, and not only sent a copy of the *Lives of the Poets* to the rural philosopher, but deigned to grant him a personal interview.

Dearer than any such praise was the approval of Johnson's wife. She told him that, well as she had thought of him before, she had not considered him equal to such a performance. The voice that so charmed him was soon to be silenced for ever. Mrs. Johnson died (March 17th, 1752) three days after the appearance of the last *Rambler*. The man who has passed through such a trial knows well that, whatever may be in store for him in the dark future, fate can have no heavier blow in reserve. Though John-

son once acknowledged to Boswell, when in a placid humour, that happier days had come to him in his old age than in his early life, he would probably have added that though fame and friendship and freedom from the harrowing cares of poverty might cause his life to be more equably happy, yet their rewards could represent but a faint and mocking reflection of the best moments of a happy marriage. His strong mind and tender nature reeled under the blow. Here is one pathetic little note written to the friend, Dr. Taylor, who had come to him in his distress. That which first announced the calamity, and which, said Taylor, "expressed grief in the strongest manner he had ever read," is lost.

"Dear Sir,—Let me have your company and instruction. Do not live away from me. My distress is great.

"Pray desire Mrs. Taylor to inform me what mourning I should buy for my mother and Miss Porter, and bring a note in writing with you.

"Remember me in your prayers, for vain is the help of man.

"I am, dear sir,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

We need not regret that a veil is drawn over the details of the bitter agony of his passage through the valley of the shadow of death. It is enough to put down the wails which he wrote long afterwards when visibly approaching the close of all human emotions and interests:—

"This is the day on which, in 1752, dear Letty died. I have now uttered a prayer of repentance and contrition; perhaps Letty knows that I prayed for her. Perhaps Letty is now praying for me. God help me. Thou, God, art merciful, hear my prayers and enable me to trust in Thee.

"We were married almost seventeen years, and have now been parted thirty."

It seems half profane, even at this distance of time, to pry into grief so deep and so lasting. Johnson turned for relief to that which all sufferers know to be the only remedy for sorrow—hard labour. He set to work in his garret, an inconvenient room, "because," he said, "in that room only I never saw Mrs. Johnson." He helped his friend Hawkesworth in the *Adventurer*, a new periodical of the *Rambler* kind; but his main work was the *Dictionary*, which came out at last in 1755. Its appearance was the occasion of an explosion of wrath which marks an epoch in our literature. Johnson, as we have seen, had dedicated the *Plan* to Lord Chesterfield; and his language implies that they had been to some extent in personal communication. Chesterfield's fame is in curious antithesis to Johnson's. He was a man of great abilities, and seems to have deserved high credit for some parts of his statesmanship. As a Viceroy in Ireland in particular he showed qualities rare in his generation. To Johnson he was known as the nobleman who had a wide social influence as an acknowledged *arbiter elegantiarum*, and who reckoned among his claims some of that literary polish in which the earlier generation of nobles had certainly been superior to their successors. The art of life expounded in his *Letters* differs from Johnson as much as the elegant diplomatist differs from the rough intellectual gladiator of Grub Street. Johnson spoke his mind of his rival without reserve. "I thought," he said, "that this man had been a Lord among wits; but I find he is only a wit among Lords." And of the *Letters* he said more keenly that they taught the morals of a harlot and the manners of a dancing-master. Chesterfield's opinion of Johnson is indicated by the description

in his *Letters* of a "respectable Hottentot, who throws his meat anywhere but down his throat. This absurd person," said Chesterfield, "was not only uncouth in manners and warm in dispute, but behaved exactly in the same way to superiors, equals, and inferiors; and therefore, by a necessary consequence, absurdly to two of the three. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ!*"

Johnson, in my opinion, was not far wrong in his judgment, though it would be a gross injustice to regard Chesterfield as nothing but a fribble. But men representing two such antithetic types were not likely to admire each other's good qualities. Whatever had been the intercourse between them, Johnson was naturally annoyed when the dignified noble published two articles in the *World*—a periodical supported by such polite personages as himself and Horace Walpole—in which the need of a dictionary was set forth, and various courtly compliments described Johnson's fitness for a dictatorship over the language. Nothing could be more prettily turned; but it meant, and Johnson took it to mean, I should like to have the dictionary dedicated to me: such a compliment would add a feather to my cap, and enable me to appear to the world as a patron of literature as well as an authority upon manners. "After making great professions," as Johnson said, "he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my *Dictionary* was coming out, he fell a scribbling in the *World* about it." Johnson therefore bestowed upon the noble earl a piece of his mind in a letter which was not published till it came out in Boswell's biography.

"My Lord,—I have been lately informed by the proprietor of the *World* that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour

which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself, *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the arts of pleasing which a wearied and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms and was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

"The shepherd in *Virgil* grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached the ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and

do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, should less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

The letter is one of those knock-down blows to which no answer is possible, and upon which comment is superfluous. It was, as Mr. Carlyle calls it, "the far-famed blast of doom proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield and through him, of the listening world, that patronage should be no more."

That is all that can be said; yet perhaps it should be added that Johnson remarked that he had once received £10 from Chesterfield, though he thought the assistance too inconsiderable to be mentioned in such a letter. Hawkins also states that Chesterfield sent overtures to Johnson through two friends, one of whom, long Sir Thomas Robinson, stated that, if he were rich enough (a judicious clause) he would himself settle £500 a year upon Johnson. Johnson replied that if the first peer of the realm made such an offer, he would show him the way downstairs. Hawkins is startled at this insolence, and at Johnson's uniform assertion that an offer of money was an insult. We cannot tell what was the history of the £10; but Johnson, in spite of Hawkins's righteous indignation, was in fact too

proud to be a beggar, and owed to his pride his escape from the fate of Savage.

The appearance of the *Dictionary* placed Johnson in the position described soon afterwards by Smollett. He was henceforth "the great Cham of Literature"—a monarch sitting in the chair previously occupied by his namesake, Ben, by Dryden, and by Pope; but which has since that time been vacant. The world of literature has become too large for such authority. Complaints were not seldom uttered at the time. Goldsmith has urged that Boswell wished to make a monarchy of what ought to be a republic. Goldsmith, who would have been the last man to find serious fault with the dictator, thought the dictatorship objectionable. Some time indeed was still to elapse before we can say that Johnson was firmly seated on the throne; but the *Dictionary* and the *Rambler* had given him a position not altogether easy to appreciate, now that the *Dictionary* has been superseded and the *Rambler* gone out of fashion. His name was the highest at this time (1755) in the ranks of pure literature. The fame of Warburton possibly bulked larger for the moment, and one of his flatterers was comparing him to the Colossus which bestrides the petty world of contemporaries. But Warburton had subsided into episcopal repose, and literature had been for him a stepping-stone rather than an ultimate aim. Hume had written works of far more enduring influence than Johnson; but they were little read though generally abused, and scarcely belong to the purely literary history. The first volume of his *History of England* had appeared (1754), but had not succeeded. The second was just coming out. Richardson was still giving laws to his little seraglio of adoring women; Fielding had died (1754), worn out by labour and dissipation; Smollett was active in the literary

trade, but not in such a way as to increase his own dignity or that of his employment; Gray was slowly writing a few lines of exquisite verse in his retirement at Cambridge; two young Irish adventurers, Burke and Goldsmith, were just coming to London to try their fortune; Adam Smith made his first experiment as an author by reviewing the *Dictionary* in the *Edinburgh Review*; Robertson had not yet appeared as a historian; Gibbon was at Lausanne repenting of his old brief lapse into Catholicism as an act of undergraduate's folly; and Cowper, after three years of "giggling and making giggle" with Thurlow in an attorney's office, was now entered at the Temple and amusing himself at times with literature in company with such small men of letters as Colman, Bonnell Thornton, and Lloyd. It was a slack tide of literature; the generation of Pope had passed away and left no successors, and no writer of the time could be put in competition with the giant now known as "Dictionary Johnson."

When the last sheet of the *Dictionary* had been carried to the publisher, Millar, Johnson asked the messenger, "What did he say?" "Sir," said the messenger, "he said, 'Thank God I have done with him.'" "I am glad," replied Johnson, "that he thanks God for anything." Thankfulness for relief from seven years' toil seems to have been Johnson's predominant feeling: and he was not anxious for a time to take any new labours upon his shoulders. Some years passed which have left few traces either upon his personal or his literary history. He contributed a good many reviews in 1756-7 to the *Literary Magazine*, one of which, a review of Soame Jenyns, is amongst his best performances. To a weekly paper he contributed for two years, from April, 1758, to April, 1760, a set of essays called the *Idler*, on the old *Rambler* plan. He did some

small literary cobbler's work, receiving a guinea for a prospectus to a newspaper and ten pounds for correcting a volume of poetry. He had advertised in 1756 a new edition of Shakspeare which was to appear by Christmas, 1757: but he dawdled over it so unconscionably that it did not appear for nine years; and then only in consequence of taunts from Churchill, who accused him with too much plausibility of cheating his subscribers.

He for subscribers baits his hook;
And takes your cash: but where's the book?
No matter where; wise fear, you know
Forbids the robbing of a foe;
But what to serve our private ends
Forbids the cheating of our friends?

In truth, his constitutional indolence seems to have gained advantages over him, when the stimulus of a heavy task was removed. In his meditations, there are many complaints of his "sluggishness" and resolutions of amendment. "A kind of strange oblivion has spread over me," he says in April, 1764, "so that I know not what has become of the last years, and perceive that incidents and intelligence pass over me without leaving any impression."

It seems, however, that he was still frequently in difficulties. Letters are preserved showing that in the beginning of 1756, Richardson became surety for him for a debt, and lent him six guineas to release him from arrest. An event which happened three years later illustrates his position and character. In January, 1759, his mother died at the age of ninety. Johnson was unable to come to Lichfield, and some deeply pathetic letters to her and her stepdaughter, who lived with her, record his emotions. Here is the last sad farewell upon the snapping of the most sacred of human ties.

"Dear Honoured Mother," he says in a letter enclosed to Lucy Porter, the step-daughter, "neither your condition nor your character make it fit for me to say much. You have been the best mother, and I believe the best woman in the world. I thank you for your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness of all that I have done ill, and of all that I have omitted to do well. God grant you His Holy Spirit, and receive you to everlasting happiness for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Lord Jesus receive your spirit. I am, dear, dear mother,

"Your dutiful son,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON."

Johnson managed to raise twelve guineas, six of them borrowed from his printer, to send to his dying mother. In order to gain money for her funeral expenses and some small debts, he wrote the story of *Rasselas*. It was composed in the evenings of a single week, and sent to press as it was written. He received £100 for this, perhaps the most successful of his minor writings, and £25 for a second edition. It was widely translated and universally admired. One of the strangest of literary coincidences is the contemporary appearance of this work and Voltaire's *Candide*; to which, indeed, it bears in some respects so strong a resemblance that, but for Johnson's apparent contradiction, we would suppose that he had at least heard some description of its design. The two stories, though widely differing in tone and style, are among the most powerful expressions of the melancholy produced in strong intellects by the sadness and sorrows of the world. The literary excellence of *Candide* has secured for it a wider and more enduring popularity than has fallen to the lot of Johnson's far heavier production. But

Rasselas is a book of singular force, and bears the most characteristic impression of Johnson's peculiar temperament.

A great change was approaching in Johnson's circumstances. When George III. came to the throne, it struck some of his advisers that it would be well, as Boswell puts it, to open "a new and brighter prospect to men of literary merit." This commendable design was carried out by offering to Johnson a pension of three hundred a year. Considering that such men as Horace Walpole and his like were enjoying sinecures of more than twice as many thousands for being their father's sons, the bounty does not strike one as excessively liberal. It seems to have been really intended as some set-off against other pensions bestowed upon various hangers-on of the Scotch prime minister, Bute. Johnson was coupled with the contemptible scribbler, Shebbeare, who had lately been in the pillory for a Jacobite libel (a "he-bear" and a "sne-bear," said the facetious newspapers), and when a few months afterwards a pension of £200 a year was given to the old actor, Sheridan, Johnson growled out that it was time for him to resign his own. Somebody kindly repeated the remark to Sheridan, who would never afterwards speak to Johnson.

The pension, though very welcome to Johnson, who seems to have been in real distress at the time, suggested some difficulty. Johnson had unluckily spoken of a pension in his *Dictionary* as "generally understood to mean pay given to a State hireling for treason to his country." He was assured, however, that he did not come within the definition; and that the reward was given for what he had done, not for anything that he was expected to do. After some hesitation, Johnson consented to accept the

payment thus offered without the direct suggestion of any obligation, though it was probably calculated that he would in case of need, be the more ready, as actually happened, to use his pen in defence of authority. He had not compromised his independence and might fairly laugh at angry comments. "I wish," he said afterwards, "that my pension were twice as large, that they might make twice as much noise." "I cannot now curse the House of Hanover," was his phrase on another occasion: "but I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover and drinking King James's health, all amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year." In truth, his Jacobitism was by this time, whatever it had once been, nothing more than a humorous crotchet, giving opportunity for the expression of Tory prejudice.

"I hope you will now purge and live cleanly like a gentleman," was Beauchamp's comment upon hearing of his friend's accession of fortune, and as Johnson is now emerging from Grub Street, it is desirable to consider what manner of man was to be presented to the wider circles that were opening to receive him.

CHAPTER III

JOHNSON AND HIS FRIENDS.

It is not till some time after Johnson had come into the enjoyment of his pension, that we first see him through the eyes of competent observers. The Johnson of our knowledge, the most familiar figure to all students of English literary history had already long passed the prime of life, and done the greatest part of his literary work. His character, in the common phrase, had been "formed" years before; as, indeed, people's characters are chiefly formed in the cradle; and, not only his character, but the habits which are learnt in the great schoolroom of the world were fixed beyond any possibility of change. The strange eccentricities which had now become a second nature, amazed the society in which he was for over twenty years a prominent figure. Unsympathetic observers, those especially to whom the Chesterfield type represented the ideal of humanity, were simply disgusted or repelled. The man, they thought, might be in his place at a Grub Street pot-house; but had no business in a lady's drawing-room. If he had been modest and retiring, they might have put up with his defects; but Johnson was not a person whose qualities, good or bad, were of a kind to be ignored. Naturally enough, the fashionable world cared little for the rugged old giant.

"The great," said Johnson, "had tried him and given him up ; they had seen enough of him ;" and his reason was pretty much to the purpose. "Great lords and great ladies don't love to have their mouths stopped," especially not, one may add, by an unwashed fist.

It is easy to blame them now. Everybody can see that a saint in beggar's rags is intrinsically better than a sinner in gold lace. But the principle is one of those which serves us for judging the dead, much more than for regulating our own conduct. Those, at any rate, may throw the first stone at the Horace Walpoles and Chesterfields, who are quite certain that they would ask a modern Johnson to their houses. The trial would be severe. Poor Mrs. Boswell complained grievously of her husband's idolatry. "I have seen many a bear led by a man," she said ; "but I never before saw a man led by a bear." The truth is, as Boswell explains, that the sage's uncouth habits, such as turning the candles' heads downwards to make them burn more brightly, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, "could not but be disagreeable to a lady."

He had other habits still more annoying to people of delicate perceptions. A hearty despiser of all affectations, he despised especially the affectation of indifference to the pleasures of the table. "For my part," he said, "I mind my belly very studiously and very carefully, for I look upon it that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else." Avowing this principle he would innocently give himself the airs of a scientific epicure. "I, madam," he said to the terror of a lady with whom he was about to sup, "who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home, for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of

his cook, whereas, madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge." But his pretensions to exquisite taste are by no means borne out by independent witnesses. "He laughs," said Tom Davies, "like a rhinoceros," and he seems to have eaten like a wolf—savagely, silently, and with indiscriminating fury. He was not a pleasant object during this performance. He was totally absorbed in the business of the moment, a strong perspiration came out, and the veins of his forehead swelled. He liked coarse satisfying dishes—boiled pork and veal-pie stuffed with plums and sugar; and in regard to wine, he seems to have accepted the doctrines of the critic of a certain fluid professing to be port, who asked, "What more can you want? It is black, and it is thick, and it makes you drunk." Claret, as Johnson put it, "is the liquor for boys, and port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy." He could, however, refrain, though he could not be moderate, and for all the latter part of his life, from 1766, he was a total abstainer. Nor, it should be added, does he ever appear to have sought for more than exhilaration from wine. His earliest intimate friend, Hector, said that he had never but once seen him drunk.

His appetite for more innocent kinds of food was equally excessive. He would eat seven or eight peaches before breakfast, and declared that he had only once in his life had as much wall-fruit as he wished. His consumption of tea was prodigious, beyond all precedent. Hawkins quotes Bishop Burnet as having drunk sixteen large cups every morning, a feat which would entitle him to be reckoned as a rival. "A hardened and shameless tea-drinker," Johnson called himself, who "with tea amuses the evenings, with tea solaces the midnights, and with tea

welcomes the mornings." One of his teapots, preserved by a relic-hunter, contained two quarts, and he professed to have consumed five and twenty cups at a sitting. Poor Mrs. Thrale complains that he often kept her up making tea for him till four in the morning. His reluctance to go to bed was due to the fact that his nights were periods of intense misery; but the vast potations of tea can scarcely have tended to improve them.

The huge frame was clad in the raggedest of garments, until his acquaintance with the Thrales led to a partial reform. His wigs were generally burnt in front, from his shortsighted knack of reading with his head close to the candle; and at the Thrales, the butler stood ready to effect a change of wigs as he passed into the dining-room. Once or twice we have accounts of his bursting into unusual splendour. He appeared at the first representation of *Irene* in a scarlet waistcoat lined with gold; and on one of his first interviews with Goldsmith he took the trouble to array himself decently, because Goldsmith was reported to have justified slovenly habits by the precedent of the leader of his craft. Goldsmith, judging by certain famous suits, seems to have profited by the hint more than his preceptor. As a rule, Johnson's appearance, before he became a pensioner, was worthy of the proverbial manner of Grub Street. Beauclerk used to describe how he had once taken a French lady of distinction to see Johnson in his chambers. On descending the staircase they heard a noise like thunder. Johnson was pursuing them, struck by a sudden sense of the demands upon his gallantry. He brushed in between Beauclerk and the lady, and seizing her hand conducted her to her coach. A crowd of people collected to stare at the sage, dressed in rusty brown, with a pair of old shoes for slippers, a shrivelled wig on the top

of his head, and with shirtsleeves and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. In those days, clergymen and physicians were only just abandoning the use of their official costume in the streets, and Johnson's slovenly habits were even more marked than they would be at present. "I have no passion for clean linen," he once remarked, and it is to be feared that he must sometimes have offended more senses than one.

In spite of his uncouth habits of dress and manners, Johnson claimed and, in a sense, with justice, to be a polite man. "I look upon myself," he said once to Boswell, "as a very polite man." He could show the stately courtesy of a sound Tory, who cordially accepts the principle of social distinction, but has far too strong a sense of self-respect to fancy that compliance with the ordinary conventions can possibly lower his own position. Rank of the spiritual kind was especially venerable to him. "I should as soon have thought of contradicting a bishop," was a phrase which marked the highest conceivable degree of deference to a man whom he respected. Nobody, again, could pay more effective compliments, when he pleased; and the many female friends who have written of him agree, that he could be singularly attractive to women. Women are, perhaps, more inclined than men to forgive external roughness in consideration of the great charm of deep tenderness in a thoroughly masculine nature. A characteristic phrase was his remark to Miss Monckton. She had declared, in opposition to one of Johnson's prejudices, that Sterne's writings were pathetic: "I am sure," she said, "they have affected me." "Why," said Johnson, smiling and rolling himself about, "that is because, dearest, you are a dunce!" When she mentioned this to him some time afterwards he replied: "Madam, if I had

thought so, I certainly should not have said it." The truth could not be more neatly put.

Boswell notes, with some surprise, that when Johnson dined with Lord Monboddo he insisted upon rising when the ladies left the table, and took occasion to observe that politeness was "fictitious benevolence," and equally useful in common intercourse. Boswell's surprise seems to indicate that Scotchmen in those days were even greater bears than Johnson. He always insisted, as Miss Reynolds tells us, upon showing ladies to their carriages through Bolt Court, though his dress was such that her readers would, she thinks, be astonished that any man in his senses should have shown himself in it abroad or even at home. Another odd indication of Johnson's regard for good manners, so far as his lights would take him, was the extreme disgust with which he often referred to a certain footman in Paris, who used his fingers in place of sugar-tongs. So far as Johnson could recognize bad manners he was polite enough, though unluckily the limitation is one of considerable importance.

Johnson's claims to politeness were sometimes, it is true, put in a rather startling form. "Every man of any education," he once said to the amazement of his hearers, "would rather be called a rascal than accused of deficiency in the graces." Gibbon, who was present, slid inquired of a lady whether among all her acquaintance she could not find *one* exception. According to Mrs. Thrale, he went even further. Dr. Barnard, he said, was the only man who had ever done justice to his good breeding; "and you may observe," he added, "that I am well-bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity." He proceeded, according to Mrs. Thrale, but the report a little taxes our faith, to claim the virtues not only of respecting ceremony, but of never

contradicting or interrupting his hearers. It is rather odd that Dr. Barnard had once a sharp altercation with Johnson, and avenged himself by a sarcastic copy of verses in which, after professing to learn perfectness from different friends, he says,—

Johnson shall teach me how to place,
In varied light, each borrow'd grace;
From him I'll learn to write;
Copy his clear familiar style,
And by the roughness of his file,
Grow, like himself, polite.

Johnson, on this as on many occasions, repented of the blow as soon as it was struck, and sat down by Barnard, "literally smoothing down his arms and knees," and beseeching pardon. Barnard accepted his apologies, but went home and wrote his little copy of verses.

Johnson's shortcomings in civility were no doubt due, in part, to the narrowness of his faculties of perception. He did not know, for he could not see, that his uncouth gestures and slovenly dress were offensive; and he was not so well able to observe others as to shake off the manners contracted in Grub Street. It is hard to study a manual of etiquette late in life, and for a man of Johnson's imperfect faculties it was probably impossible. Errors of this kind were always pardonable, and are now simply ludicrous. But Johnson often shocked his companions by more indefensible conduct. He was irascible, overbearing, and, when angry, vehement beyond all propriety. He was a "tremendous companion," said Garrick's brother; and men of gentle nature, like Charles Fox, often shrank from his company, and perhaps exaggerated his brutality.

Johnson, who had long regarded conversation as the chief amusement, came in later years to regard it as almost

the chief employment of life ; and he had studied the art with the zeal of a man pursuing a favourite hobby. He had always, as he told Sir Joshua Reynolds, made it a principle to talk on all occasions as well as he could. He had thus obtained a mastery over his weapons which made him one of the most accomplished of conversational gladiators. He had one advantage which has pretty well disappeared from modern society, and the disappearance of which has been destructive to excellence of talk. A good talker, even more than a good orator, implies a good audience. Modern society is too vast and too restless to give a conversationalist a fair chance. For the formation of real proficiency in the art, friends should meet often, sit long, and be thoroughly at ease. A modern audience generally breaks up before it is well warmed through, and includes enough strangers to break the magic circle of social electricity. The clubs in which Johnson delighted were excellently adapted to foster his peculiar talent. There a man could "fold his legs and have his talk out"—a pleasure hardly to be enjoyed now. And there a set of friends meeting regularly, and meeting to talk, learnt to sharpen each other's skill in all dialectic manœuvres. Conversation may be pleasantest, as Johnson admitted, when two friends meet quietly to exchange their minds without any thought of display. But conversation considered as a game, as a bout of intellectual sword-play, has also charms which Johnson intensely appreciated. His talk was not of the encyclopædia variety, like that of some more modern celebrities ; but it was full of apposite illustrations and unrivalled in keen argument, rapid flashes of wit and humour, scornful retort and dexterous sophistry. Sometimes he would fell his adversary at a blow ; his sword, as Boswell said, would be through your body in an instant without

preliminary flourishes; and in the excitement of talking for victory, he would use any device that came to hand. "There is no arguing with Johnson," said Goldsmith, quoting a phrase from Cibber, "for if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt-end of it."

Johnson's view of conversation is indicated by his remark about Burke. "That fellow," he said at a time of illness, "calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now, it would kill me." "It is when you come close to a man in conversation," he said on another occasion, "that you discover what his real abilities are. To make a speech in an assembly is a knack. Now I honour Thurlow, sir; Thurlow is a fine fellow, he fairly puts his mind to yours."

Johnson's retorts were fair play under the conditions of the game, as it is fair play to kick an opponent's shins at football. But of course a man who had, as it were, become the acknowledged champion of the ring, and who had an irascible and thoroughly dogmatic temper, was tempted to become unduly imperious. In the company of which Savage was a distinguished member, one may guess that the conversational fervour sometimes degenerated into horse-play. Want of arguments would be supplied by personality, and the champion would avenge himself by brutality on an opponent who happened for once to be getting the best of him. Johnson, as he grew older and got into more polished society, became milder in his manners; but he had enough of the old spirit left in him to break forth at times with ungovernable fury, and astonish the well-regulated minds of respectable ladies and gentlemen.

Anecdotes illustrative of this ferocity abound, and his best friends—except, perhaps, Reynolds and Burke—had all to suffer in turn. On one occasion, when he had made a rude speech even to Reynolds, Boswell states, though with

some hesitation, his belief that Johnson actually blushed. The records of his contests in this kind fill a large space in Boswell's pages. That they did not lead to worse consequences shows his absence of rancour. He was always ready and anxious for a reconciliation, though he would not press for one if his first overtures were rejected. There was no venom in the wounds he inflicted, for there was no ill-nature; he was rough in the heat of the struggle, and in such cases careless in distributing blows; but he never enjoyed giving pain. None of his tiffs ripened into permanent quarrels, and he seems scarcely to have lost a friend. He is a pleasant contrast in this, as in much else, to Horace Walpole, who succeeded, in the course of a long life, in breaking with almost all his old friends. No man set a higher value upon friendship than Johnson. "A man," he said to Reynolds, "ought to keep his friendship in constant repair;" or he would find himself left alone as he grew older. "I look upon a day as lost," he said later in life, "in which I do not make a new acquaintance." Making new acquaintances did not involve dropping the old. The list of his friends is a long one, and includes, as it were, successive layers, superposed upon each other, from the earliest period of his life.

This is so marked a feature in Johnson's character, that it will be as well at this point to notice some of the friendships from which he derived the greatest part of his happiness. Two of his schoolfellows, Hector and Taylor, remained his intimates through life. Hector survived to give information to Boswell, and Taylor, then a prebendary of Westminster, read the funeral service over his old friend in the Abbey. He showed, said some of the bystanders, too little feeling. The relation between the two men was not one of special tenderness; indeed they were so little

congenial that Boswell rather gratuitously suspected his venerable teacher of having an eye to Taylor's will. It seems fairer to regard the acquaintance as an illustration of that curious adhesiveness which made Johnson cling to less attractive persons. At any rate, he did not show the complacency of the proper will-hunter. Taylor was rector of Bosworth and squire of Ashbourne. He was a fine specimen of the squire-parson; a justice of the peace, a warm politician, and what was worse, a warm Whig. He raised gigantic bulls, bragged of selling cows for 120 guineas and more, and kept a noble butler in purple clothes and a large white wig. Johnson respected Taylor as a sensible man, but was ready to have a round with him on occasion. He snorted contempt when Taylor talked of breaking some small vessels if he took an emetic. "Bah," said the doctor, who regarded a valetudinarian as a "scoundrel," "if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't." Nay, if he did not condemn Taylor's cows, he criticized his bulldog with cruel acuteness. "No, sir, he is not well shaped; for there is not the quick transition from the thickness of the fore-part to the *tenuity*—the thin part—behind, which a bulldog ought to have." On the more serious topic of politics his Jacobite fulminations roused Taylor "to a pitch of bellowing." Johnson roared out that if the people of England were fairly polled (this was in 1777) the present king would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow. Johnson, however, rendered Taylor the substantial service of writing sermons for him, two volumes of which were published after they were both dead; and Taylor must have been a bold man, if it be true, as has been said, that he refused to preach a sermon written by Johnson upon Mrs. Johnson's death, on

the ground that it spoke too favourably of the character of the deceased.

Johnson paid frequent visits to Lichfield, to keep up his old friends. One of them was Lucy Porter, his wife's daughter, with whom, according to Miss Seward, he had been in love before he married her mother. He was at least tenderly attached to her through life. And, for the most part, the good people of Lichfield seem to have been proud of their fellow-townsmen, and gave him a substantial proof of their sympathy by continuing to him, on favourable terms, the lease of a house originally granted to his father. There was, indeed, one remarkable exception in Miss Seward, who belonged to a genus specially contemptible to the old doctor. She was one of the fine ladies who dabbled in poetry, and aimed at being the centre of a small literary circle at Lichfield. Her letters are amongst the most amusing illustrations of the petty affectations and squabbles characteristic of such a provincial clique. She evidently hated Johnson at the bottom of her small soul; and, indeed, though Johnson once paid her a preposterous compliment—a weakness of which this stern moralist was apt to be guilty in the company of ladies—he no doubt trod pretty roughly upon some of her pet vanities.

By far the most celebrated of Johnson's Lichfield friends was David Garrick, in regard to whom his relations were somewhat peculiar. Reynolds said that Johnson considered Garrick to be his own property, and would never allow him to be praised or blamed by any one else without contradiction. Reynolds composed a pair of imaginary dialogues to illustrate the proposition, in one of which Johnson attacks Garrick in answer to Reynolds, and in the other defends him in answer to Gibbon. The dialogues seem to be very good reproductions of the Johnsonian

manner, though perhaps the courteous Reynolds was a little too much impressed by its roughness; and they probably include many genuine remarks of Johnson's. It is remarkable that the praise is far more pointed and elaborate than the blame, which turns chiefly upon the general inferiority of an actor's position. And, in fact, this seems to have corresponded to Johnson's opinion about Garrick as gathered from Boswell.

The two men had at bottom a considerable regard for each other, founded upon old association, mutual services, and reciprocal respect for talents of very different orders. But they were so widely separated by circumstances, as well as by a radical opposition of temperament, that any close intimacy could hardly be expected. The bear and the monkey are not likely to be intimate friends. Garrick's rapid elevation in fame and fortune seems to have produced a certain degree of envy in his old schoolmaster. A grave moral philosopher has, of course, no right to look askance at the rewards which fashion lavishes upon men of lighter and less lasting merit, and which he professes to despise. Johnson, however, was troubled with a rather excessive allowance of human nature. Moreover he had the good old-fashioned contempt for players, characteristic both of the Tory and the inartistic mind. He asserted roundly that he looked upon players as no better than dancing-dogs. "But, sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?" "Yes, sir, as some dogs dance better than others." So when Goldsmith accused Garrick of grossly flattering the queen, Johnson exclaimed, "And as to meanness—how is it mean in a player, a showman, a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling, to flatter his queen?" At another time Boswell suggested that we might respect a great player. "What! sir," exclaimed Johnson, "a

fellow who claps a hump upon his back and a lump on his leg and cries, '*I am Richard III.*'? Nay, sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things: he repeats and he sings; there is both recitation and music in his performance—the player only recites."

Such sentiments were not very likely to remain unknown to Garrick nor to put him at ease with Johnson, whom, indeed, he always suspected of laughing at him. They had a little tiff on account of Johnson's Edition of Shakspeare. From some misunderstanding, Johnson did not make use of Garrick's collection of old plays. Johnson, it seems, thought that Garrick should have courted him more, and perhaps sent the plays to his house; whereas Garrick, knowing that Johnson treated books with a roughness ill-suited to their constitution, thought that he had done quite enough by asking Johnson to come to his library. The revenge—if it was revenge—taken by Johnson was to say nothing of Garrick in his Preface, and to glance obliquely at his non-communication of his rarities. He seems to have thought that it would be a lowering of Shakspeare to admit that his fame owed anything to Garrick's exertions.

Boswell innocently communicated to Garrick a criticism of Johnson's upon one of his poems—

I'd smile with the simple and feed with the poor.

"Let me smile with the wise, and feed with the rich," was Johnson's tolerably harmless remark. Garrick, however, did not like it, and when Boswell tried to console him by saying that Johnson gored everybody in turn, and added, "*facnum habet in cornu.*" "Ay," said Garrick vehemently, "he has a whole mow of it."

The most unpleasant incident was when Garrick's proposed rather too freely to be a member of the Club. Johnson said that the first duke in England had no right to use such language, and said, according to Mrs. Thrale, "If Garrick does apply, I'll blackball him. Surely we ought to be able to sit in a society like ours—

'Unelbowed by a gamester, pimp, or player!'

Nearly ten years afterwards, however, Johnson favoured his election, and when he died, declared that the Club should have a year's widowhood. No successor to Garrick was elected during that time.

Johnson sometimes ventured to criticise Garrick's acting, but here Garrick could take his full revenge. The purblind Johnson was not, we may imagine, much of a critic in such matters. Garrick reports him to have said of an actor at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow;" when, in fact, said Garrick, "he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards."

In spite of such collisions of opinion and mutual criticism, Johnson seems to have spoken in the highest terms of Garrick's good qualities, and they had many pleasant meetings. Garrick takes a prominent part in two or three of the best conversations in Boswell, and seems to have put his interlocutors in specially good temper. Johnson declared him to be "the first man in the world for sprightly conversation." He said that Dryden had written much better prologues than any of Garrick's, but that Garrick had written more good prologues than Dryden. He declared that it was wonderful how little Garrick had been spoiled by all the flattery that he had received. No wonder if he was a little vain: "a man who is perpetually flattered

in every mode that can be conceived : so many bellows have blown the fuel, that one wonders he is not by this time become a cinder !” “ If all this had happened to me,” he said on another occasion, “ I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down everybody that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber and Quin, they’d have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to us,” smiling. He admitted at the same time that Garrick had raised the profession of a player. He defended Garrick, too, against the common charge of avarice. Garrick, as he pointed out, had been brought up in a family whose study it was to make fourpence go as far as fourpence-halfpenny. Johnson remembered in early days drinking tea with Garrick when Peg Woffington made it, and made it, as Garrick grumbled, “ as red as blood.” But when Garrick became rich he became liberal. He had, so Johnson declared, given away more money than any man in England.

After Garrick’s death, Johnson took occasion to say, in the *Lives of the Poets*, that the death “ had eclipsed the gaiety of nations and diminished the public stock of harmless pleasures.” Boswell ventured to criticise the observation rather spitefully. “ Why *nations* ? Did his gaiety extend further than his own nation ? ” “ Why, sir,” replied Johnson, “ some imagination must be allowed. Besides, we may say *nations* if we allow the Scotch to be a nation, and to have gaiety—which they have not.” On the whole, in spite of various drawbacks, Johnson’s reported observations upon Garrick will appear to be discriminative, and yet, on the whole, strongly favourable to his character. Yet we are not quite surprised that Mrs. Garrick did not respond to a hint thrown out by Johnson, that he would be glad to write the life of his friend.

At Oxford, Johnson acquired the friendship of Dr. Adams, afterwards Master of Pembroke and author of a once well-known reply to Hume's argument upon miracles. He was an amiable man, and was proud to do the honours of the university to his old friend, when, in later years, Johnson revisited the much-loved scenes of his neglected youth. The warmth of Johnson's regard for old days is oddly illustrated by an interview recorded by Boswell with one Edwards, a fellow-student whom he met again in 1778, not having previously seen him since 1729. They had lived in London for forty years without once meeting, a fact more surprising then than now. Boswell eagerly gathered up the little scraps of college anecdote which the meeting produced, but perhaps his best find was a phrase of Edwards himself. "You are a philosopher, Dr. Johnson," he said; "I have tried, too, in my time to be a philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in." The phrase, as Boswell truly says, records an exquisite trait of character.

Of the friends who gathered round Johnson during his period of struggle, many had vanished before he became well known. The best loved of all seems to have been Dr. Bathurst, a physician, who, failing to obtain practice, joined the expedition to Havannah, and fell a victim to the climate (1762). Upon him Johnson pronounced a panegyric which has contributed a proverbial phrase to the language. "Dear Bathurst," he said, "was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig; he was a *very good hater*." Johnson remembered Bathurst in his prayers for years after his loss, and received from him a peculiar legacy. Francis Barber had been the negro slave of Bathurst's father, who left him his liberty by will. Dr. Bathurst allowed him to enter

Johnson's service; and Johnson sent him to school at considerable expense, and afterwards retained him in his service with little interruption till his own death. Once Barber ran away to sea, and was discharged, oddly enough, by the good offices of Wilkes, to whom Smollett applied on Johnson's behalf. Barber became an important member of Johnson's family, some of whom reproached him for his liberality to the nigger. No one ever solved the great problem as to what services were rendered by Barber to his master, whose wig was "as impenetrable by a comb as a quickset hedge," and whose clothes were never touched by the brush.

Among the other friends of this period must be reckoned his biographer, Hawkins, an attorney who was afterwards Chairman of the Middlesex Justices, and knighted on presenting an address to the King. Boswell regarded poor Sir John Hawkins with all the animosity of a rival author, and with some spice of wounded vanity. He was grievously offended, so at least says Sir John's daughter, on being described in the *Life of Johnson* as "Mr. James Boswell" without a solitary epithet such as celebrated or well-known. If that was really his feeling, he had his revenge; for no one book ever so suppressed another as Boswell's *Life* suppressed Hawkins's. In truth, Hawkins was a solemn prig, remarkable chiefly for the unusual intensity of his conviction that all virtue consists in respectability. He had a special aversion to "goodness of heart," which he regarded as another name for a quality properly called extravagance or vice. Johnson's tenacity of old acquaintance introduced him into the Club, where he made himself so disagreeable, especially, as it seems, by rudeness to Burke, that he found it expedient to invent a pretext for resignation. Johnson called him a "very un-

clubbable man," and may perhaps have intended him in the quaint description: "I really believe him to be an honest man at the bottom; though, to be sure, he is rather penurious, and he is somewhat mean; and it must be owned he has some degree of brutality, and is not without a tendency to savageness that cannot well be defended."

In a list of Johnson's friends it is proper to mention Richardson and Hawkesworth. Richardson seems to have given him substantial help, and was repaid by favourable comparisons with Fielding, scarcely borne out by the verdict of posterity. "Fielding," said Johnson, "could tell the hour by looking at the clock; whilst Richardson knew how the clock was made." "There is more knowledge of the heart," he said at another time, "in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*." Johnson's preference of the sentimentalist to the man whose humour and strong sense were so like his own, shows how much his criticism was biassed by his prejudices; though, of course, Richardson's external decency was a recommendation to the moralist. Hawkesworth's intimacy with Johnson seems to have been chiefly in the period between the *Dictionary* and the pension. He was considered to be Johnson's best imitator; and has vanished like other imitators. His fate, very doubtful if the story believed at the time be true, was a curious one for a friend of Johnson's. He had made some sceptical remarks as to the efficacy of prayer in his preface to the *South Sea Voyages*; and was so bitterly attacked by a "Christian" in the papers, that he destroyed himself by a dose of opium.

Two younger friends, who became disciples of the sage soon after the appearance of the *Rambler*, are prominent figures in the later circle. One of these was Bennet Langton, a man of good family, fine scholarship, and very

amiable character. His exceedingly tall and slender figure was compared by Beattie to the stork in Raphael's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. Miss Hawkins describes him sitting with one leg twisted round the other as though to occupy the smallest possible space, and playing with his gold snuff-box with a mild countenance and sweet smile. The gentle, modest creature was loved by Johnson, who could warm into unusual eloquence in singing his praises. The doctor, however, was rather fond of discussing with Boswell the faults of his friend. They seem to have chiefly consisted in a certain languor or sluggishness of temperament which allowed his affairs to get into perplexity. Once, when arguing the delicate question as to the propriety of telling a friend of his wife's unfaithfulness, Boswell, after his peculiar fashion, chose to enliven the abstract statement by the purely imaginary hypothesis of Mr. and Mrs. Langton being in this position. Johnson said that it would be useless to tell Langton, because he would be too sluggish to get a divorce. Once Langton was the unconscious cause of one of Johnson's oddest performances. Langton had employed Chambers, a common friend of his and Johnson's, to draw his will. Johnson, talking to Chambers and Boswell, was suddenly struck by the absurdity of his friend's appearing in the character of testator. His companions, however, were utterly unable to see in what the joke consisted; but Johnson laughed obstreperously and irrepressibly: he laughed till he reached the Temple Gate; and when in Fleet Street went almost into convulsions of hilarity. Holding on by one of the posts in the street, he sent forth such peals of laughter that they seemed in the silence of the night to resound from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch.

Not long before his death, Johnson applied to Langton

for spiritual advice. "I desired him to tell me sincerely in what he thought my life was faulty." Langton wrote upon a sheet of paper certain texts recommending Christian charity ; and explained, upon inquiry, that he was pointing at Johnson's habit of contradiction. The old doctor began by thanking him earnestly for his kindness ; but gradually waxed savage and asked Langton, "in a loud and angry tone, What is your drift, sir ?" He complained of the well-meant advice to Boswell, with a sense that he had been unjustly treated. It was a scene for a comedy, as Reynolds observed, to see a penitent get into a passion and belabour his confessor.

Through Langton, Johnson became acquainted with the friend whose manner was in the strongest contrast to his own. Topham Beauclerk was a man of fashion. He was commended to Johnson by a likeness to Charles II., from whom he was descended, being the grandson of the first Duke of St. Alban's. Beauclerk was a man of literary and scientific tastes. He inherited some of the moral laxity which Johnson chose to pardon in his ancestor. Some years after his acquaintance with Boswell he married Lady Diana Spencer, a lady who had been divorced upon his account from her husband, Lord Bolingbroke. But he took care not to obtrude his faults of life, whatever they may have been, upon the old moralist, who entertained for him a peculiar affection. He specially admired Beauclerk's skill in the use of a more polished, if less vigorous, style of conversation than his own. He envied the ease with which Beauclerk brought out his sly incisive retorts. "No man," he said, "ever was so free when he was going to say a good thing, from a look that expressed that it was coming ; or, when he had said it, from a look that expressed that it had come." When Beauclerk was dying

(in 1780), Johnson said, with a faltering voice, that he would walk to the extremity of the diameter of the earth to save him. Two little anecdotes are expressive of his tender feeling for this incongruous friend. Boswell had asked him to sup at Beauclerk's. He started, but, on the way, recollecting himself, said, "I cannot go; but *I do not love Beauclerk the less.*" Beauclerk had put upon a portrait of Johnson the inscription,—

Ingenium ingens
Inculto latet hoc sub corpore.

Langton, who bought the portrait, had the inscription removed. "L. was kind in you to take it off," said Johnson; and, after a short pause, "not unkind in him to put it on."

Early in their acquaintance, the two young men, Beau and Lanky, as Johnson called them, had sat up one night at a tavern till three in the morning. The courageous thought struck them that they would knock up the old philosopher. He came to the door of his chambers, poker in hand, with an old wig for a nightcap. On hearing their errand, the sage exclaimed, "What! is it you, you dogs? I'll have a frisk with you." And so Johnson with the two youths, his juniors by about thirty years, proceeded to make a night of it. They amazed the fruiterers in Covent Garden; they brewed a bowl of bishop in a tavern, while Johnson quoted the poet's address to Sleep,—

"Short, O short, be then thy reign,
And give us to the world again!"

They took a boat to Billingsgate, and Johnson, with Beauclerk, kept up their amusement for the following day, when Langton deserted them to go to breakfast with some

young ladies, and Johnson scolded him for leaving his friends "to go and sit with a parcel of wretched *unidea'd* girls." "I shall have my old friend to bail out of the round-house," said Garrick when he heard of this queer alliance; and he told Johnson that he would be in the *Chronicle* for his frolic. "He *durst* not do such a thing. His wife would not let him," was the moralist's retort.

Some friends, known to fame by other titles than their connexion with Johnson, had by this time gathered round them. Among them was one, whose art he was unable to appreciate, but whose fine social qualities and dignified equability of temper made him a valued and respected companion. Reynolds had settled in London at the end of 1752. Johnson met him at the house of Miss Cotterell. Reynolds had specially admired Johnson's *Life of Savage*, and, on their first meeting, happened to make a remark which delighted Johnson. The ladies were regretting the loss of a friend to whom they were under obligations. "You have, however," said Reynolds, "the comfort of being relieved from a burden of gratitude." The saying is a little too much like Rochefoucauld, and too true to be pleasant; but it was one of those keen remarks which Johnson appreciated because they prick a bubble of commonplace moralizing without demanding too literal an acceptance. He went home to sup with Reynolds and became his intimate friend. On another occasion, Johnson was offended by two ladies of rank at the same house, and by way of taking down their pride, asked Reynolds in a loud voice, "How much do you think you and I could get in a week, if we both worked as hard as we could?" "His appearance," says Sir Joshua's sister, Miss Reynolds, "might suggest the poor author: as he was not likely in that place to be a blacksmith or a porter." Poor Miss

Reynolds, who tells this story, was another attraction to Reynolds' house. She was a shy, retiring maiden lady, who vexed her famous brother by following in his steps without his talents, and was deeply hurt by his annoyance at the unintentional mockery. Johnson was through life a kind and judicious friend to her; and had attracted her on their first meeting by a significant indication of his character. He said that when going home to his lodgings at one or two in the morning, he often saw poor children asleep on thresholds and stalls—the wretched “street Arabs” of the day—and that he used to put pennies into their hands that they might buy a breakfast.

Two friends, who deserve to be placed beside Reynolds, came from Ireland to seek their fortunes in London. Edmund Burke, incomparably the greatest writer upon political philosophy in English literature, the master of a style unrivalled for richness, flexibility, and vigour, was radically opposed to Johnson on party questions, though his language upon the French Revolution, after Johnson's death, would have satisfied even the strongest prejudices of his old friend. But he had qualities which commended him even to the man who called him a “bottomless Whig,” and who generally spoke of Whigs as rascals, and maintained that the first Whig was the devil. If his intellect was wider, his heart was as warm as Johnson's, and in conversation he merited the generous applause and warm emulation of his friends. Johnson was never tired of praising the extraordinary readiness and spontaneity of Burke's conversation. “If a man,” he said, “went under a shed at the same time with Burke to avoid a shower, he would say, ‘This is an extraordinary man.’ Or if Burke went into a stable to see his horse dressed, the ostler would say, ‘We have had an extraordinary man here.’”

When Burke was first going into Parliament, Johnson said in answer to Hawkins, who wondered that such a man should get a seat, "We who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." Speaking of certain other members of Parliament, more after the heart of Sir John Hawkins, he said that he grudged success to a man who made a figure by a knowledge of a few forms, though his mind was "as narrow as the neck of a vinegar cruet;" but then he did not grudge Burke's being the first man in the House of Commons, for he would be the first man everywhere. And Burke equally admitted Johnson's supremacy in conversation. "It is enough for me," he said to some one who regretted Johnson's monopoly of the talk on a particular occasion, "to have rung the bell for him."

The other Irish adventurer, whose career was more nearly moulded upon that of Johnson, came to London in 1756, and made Johnson's acquaintance. Some time afterwards (in or before 1761) Goldsmith, like Johnson, had tasted the bitterness of an usher's life, and escaped into the scarcely more tolerable regions of Grub Street. After some years of trial, he was becoming known to the booksellers as a serviceable hand, and had two works in his desk destined to lasting celebrity. His landlady (apparently 1764) one day arrested him for debt. Johnson, summoned to his assistance, sent him a guinea and speedily followed. The guinea had already been changed, and Goldsmith was consoling himself with a bottle of Madeira. Johnson corked the bottle, and a discussion of ways and means brought out the manuscript of the *Vicar of Wakefield*. Johnson looked into it, took it to a bookseller, got sixty pounds for it, and returned to Goldsmith, who paid his rent and administered a sound rating to his landlady.

The relation thus indicated is characteristic; Johnson was as a rough but helpful elder brother to poor Goldsmith, gave him advice, sympathy, and applause, and at times criticised him pretty sharply, or brought down his conversational bludgeon upon his sensitive friend. "He has nothing of the bear but his skin," was Goldsmith's comment upon his clumsy friend, and the two men appreciated each other at bottom. Some of their readers may be inclined to resent Johnson's attitude of superiority. The admirably pure and tender heart, and the exquisite intellectual refinement implied in the *Vicar* and the *Traveller*, force us to love Goldsmith in spite of superficial foibles, and when Johnson prunes or interpolates lines in the *Traveller*, we feel as though a woodman's axe was hacking at a most delicate piece of carving. The evidence of contemporary observers, however, must force impartial readers to admit that poor Goldsmith's foibles were real, however amply compensated by rare and admirable qualities. Garrick's assertion, that he "wrote like an angel but talked like poor Poll," expresses the unanimous opinion of all who had actually seen him. Undoubtedly some of the stories of his childlike vanity, his frankly expressed envy, and his general capacity for blundering, owe something to Boswell's feeling that he was a rival near the throne, and sometimes poor Goldsmith's humorous self-assertion may have been taken too seriously by blunt English wits. One may doubt, for example, whether he was really jealous of a puppet tossing a pike, and unconscious of his absurdity in saying "Pshaw! I could do it better myself!" Boswell, however, was too good an observer to misrepresent at random, and he has, in fact, explained very well the true meaning of his remarks. Goldsmith was an excitable Irishman of genius,

who tumbled out whatever came uppermost, and revealed the feelings of the moment with utter want of reserve. His self-controlled companions wondered, ridiculed, misinterpreted, and made fewer hits as well as fewer misses. His anxiety to "get in and shine," made him, according to Johnson, an "unsocial" companion. "Goldsmith," he said, "had not temper enough for the game he played. He staked too much. A man might always get a fall from his inferior in the chances of talk, and Goldsmith felt his falls too keenly." He had certainly some trials of temper in Johnson's company. "Stay, stay," said a German, stopping him in the full flow of his eloquence, "Doctor Johnson is going to say something." An Eton Master called Graham, who was supping with the two doctors, and had got to the pitch of looking at one person, and talking to another, said, "Doctor, I shall be glad to see *you* at Eton." "I shall be glad to wait on you," said Goldsmith. "No," replied Graham, "'tis not you I mean, Doctor Minor; 'tis Doctor Major there." Poor Goldsmith said afterwards, "Graham is a fellow to make one commit suicide."

Boswell who attributes some of Goldsmith's sayings about Johnson to envy, said with probable truth that Goldsmith had not more envy than others, but only spoke of it more freely. Johnson argued that we must be angry with a man who had so much of an odious quality that he could not keep it to himself, but let it "boil over." The feeling, at any rate, was momentary and totally free from malice; and Goldsmith's criticisms upon Johnson and his idolators seem to have been fair enough. His objection to Boswell's substituting a monarchy for a republic has already been mentioned. At another time he checked Boswell's flow of panegyric by asking, "Is he like Burke,

who winds into a subject like a serpent?" To which Boswell replied with charming irrelevance, "Johnson is the Hercules who strangled serpents in his cradle." The last of Goldsmith's hits was suggested by Johnson's shaking his sides with laughter because Goldsmith admired the skill with which the little fishes in the fable were made to talk in character. "Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think," was the retort, "for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales."

In spite of sundry little sparrings, Johnson fully appreciated Goldsmith's genius. Possibly his authority hastened the spread of public appreciation, as he seemed to claim, whilst repudiating Boswell's too flattering theory that it had materially raised Goldsmith's position. When Reynolds quoted the authority of Fox in favour of the *Traveller*, saying that his friends might suspect that they had been too partial, Johnson replied very truly that the *Traveller* was beyond the need of Fox's praise, and that the partiality of Goldsmith's friends had always been against him. They would hardly give him a hearing. "Goldsmith," he added, "was a man who, whatever he wrote, always did it better than any other man could do." Johnson's settled opinion in fact was that embodied in the famous epitaph with its "nihil tetigit quod non ornavit," and, though dedications are perhaps the only literary product more generally insincere than epitaphs, we may believe that Goldsmith too meant what he said in the dedication of *She Stoops to Conquer*. "It may do me some honour to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety."

Though Johnson was thus rich in friendship, two connexions have still to be noticed which had an exceptional bearing upon his fame and happiness. In January, 1765, he made the acquaintance of the Thrales. Mr. Thrale was the proprietor of the brewery which afterwards became that of Barclay and Perkins. He was married in 1763 to a Miss Hester Lynch Salisbury, who has become celebrated from her friendship with Johnson.¹ She was a woman of great vivacity and independence of character. She had a sensitive and passionate, if not a very tender nature, and enough literary culture to appreciate Johnson's intellectual power, and on occasion to play a very respectable part in conversation. She had far more Latin and English scholarship than fell to the lot of most ladies of her day, and wit enough to preserve her from degenerating like some of the "blues," into that most offensive of beings—a feminine prig. Her marriage had been one of convenience, and her husband's want of sympathy, and jealousy of any interference in business matters, forced her, she says, to take to literature as her sole resource. "No wonder," she adds, "if I loved my books and children." It is, perhaps, more to be wondered at that her children seem to have had a rather subordinate place in her affections. The marriage, however, though not of the happiest, was perfectly decorous. Mrs. Thrale discharged her domestic duties irreproachably, even when she seems to have had some real cause of complaint. To the world she eclipsed her husband, a solid respectable man, whose mind, according to Johnson, struck the hours very regularly, though it did not mark the minutes.

¹ Mrs. Thrale was born in 1740 or 1741, probably the latter. Thrale was born in 1724.

The Thrales were introduced to Johnson by their common friend, Arthur Murphy, an actor and dramatist, who afterwards became the editor of Johnson's works. One day, when calling upon Johnson, they found him in such a fit of despair that Thrale tried to stop his mouth by placing his hand before it. The pair then joined in begging Johnson to leave his solitary abode, and come to them at their country-house at Streatham. He complied, and for the next sixteen years a room was set apart for him, both at Streatham and in their house in Southwark. He passed a large part of his time with them, and derived from the intimacy most of the comfort of his later years. He treated Mrs. Thrale with a kind of paternal gallantry, her age at the time of their acquaintance being about twenty-four, and his fifty-five. He generally called her by the playful name of "my mistress," addressed little poems to her, gave her solid advice, and gradually came to confide to her his miseries and ailments with rather surprising frankness. She flattered and amused him, and soothed his sufferings and did something towards humanizing his rugged exterior. There was one little grievance between them which requires notice. Johnson's pet virtue in private life was a rigid regard for truth. He spoke, it was said of him, as if he was always on oath. He would not, for example, allow his servant to use the phrase "not at home," and even in the heat of conversation resisted the temptation to give point to an anecdote. The lively Mrs. Thrale rather fretted against the restraint, and Johnson admonished her in vain. He complained to Boswell that she was willing to have that said of her, which the best of mankind had died rather than have said of them. Boswell, the faithful imitator of his master in this respect, delighted in taking up the parable. "Now, madam, give

me leave to catch you in the fact," he said on one occasion; "it was not an old woman, but an old man whom I mentioned, as having told me this," and he recounts his check to the "lively lady" with intense complacency. As may be imagined, Boswell and Mrs. Thrale did not love each other, in spite of the well-meant efforts of the sage to bring about a friendly feeling between his disciples.

It is time to close this list of friends with the inimitable Boswell. James Boswell, born in 1740, was the eldest son of a Whig laird and lord of sessions. He had acquired some English friends at the Scotch universities, among whom must be mentioned Mr. Temple, an English clergyman. Boswell's correspondence with Temple, discovered years after his death by a singular chance, and published in 1857, is, after the *Life of Johnson*, one of the most curious exhibitions of character in the language. Boswell was intended for the Scotch bar, and studied civil law at Utrecht in the winter of 1762. It was in the following summer that he made Johnson's acquaintance.

Perhaps the fundamental quality in Boswell's character was his intense capacity for enjoyment. He was, as Mr. Carlyle puts it, "gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character." His love of good living and good drink would have made him a hearty admirer of his countryman, Burns, had Burns been famous in Boswell's youth. No body could have joined with more thorough abandonment in the chorus to the poet's liveliest songs in praise of love and wine. He would have made an excellent fourth when "Willie brewed a peck of malt, and Rab and Allan came to see," and the drinking contest for the Whistle commemorated in another lyric would have excited his keenest interest. He was always delighted when he could get

Johnson to discuss the ethics and statistics of drinking. "I am myself," he says, "a lover of wine, and therefore curious to hear whatever is remarkable concerning drinking." The remark is *à propos* to a story of Dr. Campbell drinking thirteen bottles of port at a sitting. Lest this should seem incredible, he quotes Johnson's dictum. "Sir, if a man drinks very slowly and lets one glass evaporate before he takes another, I know not how long he may drink." Boswell's faculty for making love was as great as his power of drinking. His letters to Temple record with amusing frankness the vicissitudes of some of his courtships and the versatility of his passions.

Boswell's tastes, however, were by no means limited to sensual or frivolous enjoyments. His appreciation of the bottle was combined with an equally hearty sensibility to more intellectual pleasures. He had not a spark of philosophic or poetic power, but within the ordinary range of such topics as can be discussed at a dinner-party, he had an abundant share of liveliness and intelligence. His palate was as keen for good talk as for good wine. He was an admirable recipient, if not an originator, of shrewd or humorous remarks upon life and manners. What in regard to sensual enjoyment was mere gluttony, appeared in higher matters as an insatiable curiosity. At times this faculty became intolerable to his neighbours. "I will not be baited with what and why," said poor Johnson, one day in desperation. "Why is a cow's tail long? Why is a fox's tail bushy?" "Sir," said Johnson on another occasion, when Boswell was cross-examining a third person about him in his presence. "You have but two subjects, yourself and me. I am sick of both." Boswell, however, was not to be repelled by such a retort as this, or even by ruder rebuffs. Once when dia-

oussing the means of getting a friend to leave London, Johnson said in revenge for a previous offence. "Nay, sir, we'll send you to him. If your presence doesn't drive a man out of his house, nothing will." Boswell was "horribly shocked," but he still stuck to his victim like a leech, and pried into the minutest details of his life and manners. He observed with conscientious accuracy that though Johnson abstained from milk one fast-day, he did not reject it when put in his cup. He notes the whistlings and puffings, the trick of saying "too-too-too" of his idol : and it was a proud day when he won a bet by venturing to ask Johnson what he did with certain scraped bits of orange-peel. His curiosity was not satisfied on this occasion ; but it would have made him the prince of interviewers in these days. Nothing delighted him so much as rubbing shoulders with any famous or notorious person. He scraped acquaintance with Voltaire, Wesley, Rousseau, and Paoli, as well as with Mrs. Rudd, a forgotten heroine of the *Newgate Calendar*. He was as eager to talk to Hume the sceptic, or Wilkes the demagogue, as to the orthodox Tory, Johnson ; and, if repelled, it was from no deficiency in daring. In 1767, he took advantage of his travels in Corsica to introduce himself to Lord Chatham, then Prime Minister. The letter moderately ends by asking, "*Could your lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter ?*" I have been told how favourably your lordship has spoken of me. To correspond with a Paoli and with a Chatham is enough to keep a young man ever ardent in the pursuit of virtuous fame." No other young man of the day, we may be sure, would have dared to make such a proposal to the majestic orator.

His absurd vanity, and the greedy craving for notoriety

at any cost, would have made Boswell the most offensive of mortals, had not his unfeigned good-humour disarmed enmity. Nobody could help laughing, or be inclined to take offence at his harmless absurdities. Burke said of him that he had so much good-humour naturally, that it was scarcely a virtue. His vanity, in fact, did not generate affectation. Most vain men are vain of qualities which they do not really possess, or possess in a lower degree than they fancy. They are always acting a part, and become touchy from a half-conscious sense of the imposture. But Boswell seems to have had few such illusions. He thoroughly and unfeignedly enjoyed his own peculiarities, and thought his real self much too charming an object to be in need of any disguise. No man, therefore, was ever less embarrassed by any regard for his own dignity. He was as ready to join in a laugh at himself as in a laugh at his neighbours. He reveals his own absurdities to the world at large as frankly as Pepys confided them to a journal in cypher. He tells us how drunk he got one night in Skye, and how he cured his headache with brandy next morning; and what an intolerable fool he made of himself at an evening party in London after a dinner with the Duke of Montrose, and how Johnson in vain did his best to keep him quiet. His motive for the concession is partly the wish to illustrate Johnson's indulgence, and, in the last case, to introduce a copy of apologetic verses to the lady whose guest he had been. He reveals other weaknesses with equal frankness. One day, he says, "I owned to Johnson that I was occasionally troubled with a fit of narrowness." "Why, sir," said he, "so am I. *But I do not tell it.*" Boswell enjoys the joke far too heartily to act upon the advice

There is nothing, however, which Boswell seems to have

enjoyed more heartily than his own good impulses. He looks upon his virtuous resolution with a sort of æsthetic satisfaction, and with the glow of a virtuous man contemplating a promising penitent. Whilst suffering severely from the consequences of imprudent conduct, he gets a letter of virtuous advice from his friend Temple. He instantly sees himself reformed for the rest of his days. "My warm imagination," he says, "looks forward with great complacency on the sobriety, the healthfulness, and worth of my future life." "Every instance of our doing those things which we ought not to have done, and leaving undone those things which we ought to have done, is attended," as he elsewhere sagely observes, "with more or less of what is truly remorse;" but he seems rather to have enjoyed even the remorse. It is needless to say that the complacency was its own reward, and that the resolution vanished like other more eccentric impulses. Music, he once told Johnson, affected him intensely, producing in his mind "alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears, and of daring resolution so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest of the [purely hypothetical] battle." "Sir," replied Johnson, "I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool." Elsewhere he expresses a wish to "fly to the woods," or retire into a desert, a disposition which Johnson checked by one of his habitual gibes at the quantity of easily accessible desert in Scotland. Boswell is equally frank in describing himself in situations more provocative of contempt than even drunkenness in a drawing-room. He tells us how dreadfully frightened he was by a storm at sea in the Hebrides, and how one of his companions, "with a happy readiness," made him lay hold of a rope fastened to the masthead, and told him to pull it when he was





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ordered. Boswell was thus kept quiet in mind and harmless in body.

This extreme simplicity of character makes poor Boswell loveable in his way. If he sought notoriety, he did not so far mistake his powers as to set up for independent notoriety. He was content to shine in reflected light: and the affectations with which he is charged seem to have been unconscious imitations of his great idol. Miss Burney traced some likeness even in his dress. In the later part of the *Life* we meet phrases in which Boswell is evidently aping the true Johnsonian style. So, for example, when somebody distinguishes between "moral" and "physical necessity;" Boswell exclaims, "Alas, sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be as hard bound by chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears." But he specially emulates the profound melancholy of his hero. He seems to have taken pride in his sufferings from hypochondria; though, in truth, his melancholy diverges from Johnson's by as great a difference as that which divides any two varieties in Jaques's classification. Boswell's was the melancholy of a man who spends too much, drinks too much, falls in love too often, and is forced to live in the country in dependence upon a stern old parent, when he is longing for a jovial life in London taverns. Still he was excusably vexed when Johnson refused to believe in the reality of his complaints, and showed scant sympathy to his noisy would-be fellow-sufferer. Some of Boswell's freaks

¹ The story is often told how Boswell appeared at the Stratford Jubilee with "Corsica Boswell" in large letters on his hat. The account given apparently by himself is sufficiently amusing, but the statement is not quite fair. Boswell not unnaturally appeared at a masquerade in the dress of a Corsican chief, and the inscription on his hat seems to have been "Viva la Liberté."

were, in fact, very trying. Once he gave up writing letters for a long time, to see whether Johnson would be induced to write first. Johnson became anxious, though he half-guessed the truth, and in reference to Boswell's confession gave his disciple a piece of his mind. "Remember that all tricks are either knavish or childish, and that it is as foolish to make experiments upon the constancy of a friend as upon the chastity of a wife."

In other ways Boswell was more successful in aping his friend's peculiarities. When in company with Johnson, he became delightfully pious. "My dear sir," he exclaimed once with unrestrained fervour, "I would fain be a good man, and I am very good now. I fear God and honour the king; I wish to do no ill and to be benevolent to all mankind." Boswell hopes, "for the felicity of human nature," that many experience this mood; though Johnson judiciously suggested that he should not trust too much to impressions. In some matters Boswell showed a touch of independence by outvying the Johnsonian prejudices. He was a warm admirer of feudal principles, and especially held to the propriety of entailing property upon heirs male. Johnson had great difficulty in persuading him to yield to his father's wishes, in a settlement of the estate which contravened this theory. But Boswell takes care to declare that his opinion was not shaken. "Yet let me not be thought," he adds, "harsh or unkind to daughters; for my notion is that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family." His estimate of female rights is indicated in another phrase. When Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker, expressed a hope that the sexes would be equal in another world, Boswell replied, "That is too ambitious, madam. We might as well desire to be equal with the angels"

Boswell, again, differed from Johnson— who, in spite of his love of authority, had a righteous hatred for all recognized tyranny—by advocating the slave-trade. To abolish that trade would, he says, be robbery of the masters and cruelty to the African savages. Nay, he declares, to abolish it would be

To shut the gates of mercy on mankind !

Boswell was, according to Johnson, “ the best travelling companion in the world.” In fact, for such purposes, un-failing good-humour and readiness to make talk at all hazards are high recommendations. “ If, sir, you were shut up in a castle and a new-born baby with you, what would you do ? ” is one of his questions to Johnson,— *à propos* of nothing. That is exquisitely ludicrous, no doubt ; but a man capable of preferring such a remark to silence helps at any rate to keep the ball rolling. A more objectionable trick was his habit not only of asking preposterous or indiscreet questions, but of setting people by the ears out of sheer curiosity. The appearance of so queer a satellite excited astonishment among Johnson’s friends. “ Who is this Scotch cur at Johnson’s heels ? ” asked some one. “ He is not a cur,” replied Goldsmith ; “ he is only a bur. Tom Davies flung him at Johnson in sport, and he has the faculty of sticking.” The bur stuck till the end of Johnson’s life. Boswell visited London whenever he could, and soon began taking careful notes of Johnson’s talk. His appearance, when engaged in this task long afterwards, is described by Miss Burney. Boswell, she says, concentrated his whole attention upon his idol, not even answering questions from others. When Johnson spoke, his eyes goggled with eagerness ; he leant his ear almost on the Doctor’s shoulder ; his mouth dropped open

to catch every syllable; and he seemed to listen even to Johnson's breathings as though they had some mystical significance. He took every opportunity of edging himself close to Johnson's side even at meal-times, and was sometimes ordered imperiously back to his place like a faithful but over-obtrusive spaniel.

It is hardly surprising that Johnson should have been touched by the fidelity of this queer follower. Boswell, modestly enough, attributes Johnson's easy welcome to his interest in all manifestations of the human mind, and his pleasure in an undisguised display of its workings. The last pleasure was certainly to be obtained in Boswell's society. But in fact Boswell, though his qualities were too much those of the ordinary "good fellow," was not without virtues, and still less without remarkable talents. He was, to all appearance, a man of really generous sympathies, and capable of appreciating proofs of a warm heart and a vigorous understanding. Foolish, vain, and absurd in every way, he was yet a far kindlier and more genuine man than many who laughed at him. His singular gifts as an observer could only escape notice from a careless or inexperienced reader. Boswell has a little of the true Shaksperian secret. He lets his characters show themselves without obtruding unnecessary comment. He never misses the point of a story, though he does not ostentatiously call our attention to it. He gives just what is wanted to indicate character, or to explain the full meaning of a repartee. It is not till we compare his reports with those of less skilful hearers, that we can appreciate the skill with which the essence of a conversation is extracted, and the whole scene indicated by a few telling touches. We are tempted to fancy that we have heard the very thing, and rashly infer that Boswell was simply the mechanical trans-

uttered of the good things uttered. Any one who will try to put down the pith of a brilliant conversation within the same space, may soon satisfy himself of the absurdity of such an hypothesis, and will learn to appreciate Boswell's powers not only of memory but artistic representation. Such a feat implies not only admirable quickness of appreciation, but a rare literary faculty. Boswell's accuracy is remarkable; but it is the least part of his merit.

The book which so faithfully reflects the peculiarities of its hero and its author became the first specimen of a new literary type. Johnson himself was a master in one kind of biography; that which sets forth a condensed and vigorous statement of the essentials of a man's life and character. Other biographers had given excellent memoirs of men considered in relation to the chief historical currents of the time. But a full-length portrait of a man's domestic life with enough picturesque detail to enable us to see him through the eyes of private friendship did not exist in the language. Boswell's originality and merit may be tested by comparing his book to the ponderous performance of Sir John Hawkins, or to the dreary dissertations, falsely called lives, of which Dugald Stewart's *Life of Robertson* may be taken for a type. The writer is so anxious to be dignified and philosophical that the despairing reader seeks in vain for a single vivid touch, and discovers even the main facts of the hero's life by some indirect allusion. Boswell's example has been more or less followed by innumerable successors; and we owe it in some degree to his example that we have such delightful books as Lockhart's *Life of Scott* or Mr. Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*. Yet no later biographer has been quite as fortunate in a subject; and Boswell remains as not only the first, but the best of his class.

One special merit implies something like genius. Macaulay has given to the usual complaint which distorts the vision of most biographers the name of *lues Boswelliana*. It is true that Boswell's adoration of his hero is a typical example of the feeling. But that which distinguishes Boswell, and renders the phrase unjust, is that in him adoration never hindered accuracy of portraiture. "I will not make my tiger a cat to please anybody," was his answer to well-meaning entreaties of Hannah More to soften his accounts of Johnson's asperities. He saw instinctively that a man who is worth anything loses far more than he gains by such posthumous flattery. The whole picture is toned down, and the lights are depressed as well as the shadows. The truth is that it is unscientific to consider a man as a bundle of separate good and bad qualities, of which one half may be concealed without injury to the rest. Johnson's fits of bad temper, like Goldsmith's blundering, must be unsparingly revealed by a biographer, because they are in fact expressions of the whole character. It is necessary to take them into account in order really to understand either the merits or the shortcomings. When they are softened or omitted, the whole story becomes an enigma, and we are often tempted to substitute some less creditable explanation of errors for the true one. We should not do justice to Johnson's intense tenderness, if we did not see how often it was masked by an irritability pardonable in itself, and not affecting the deeper springs of action. To bring out the beauty of a character by means of its external oddities is the triumph of a kindly humourist; and Boswell would have acted as absurdly in suppressing Johnson's weaknesses, as Sterne would have done had he made Uncle Toby a perfectly sound and rational person. But to see this required an insight so rare that it is wanting in nearly

all the biographers who have followed Boswell's steps, and is the most conclusive proof that Boswell was a man of a higher intellectual capacity than has been generally admitted.

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CHAPTER IV.

JOHNSON AS A LITERARY DICTATOR.

WE have now reached the point at which Johnson's life becomes distinctly visible through the eyes of a competent observer. The last twenty years are those which are really familiar to us ; and little remains but to give some brief selection of Boswell's anecdotes. The task, however, is a difficult one. It is easy enough to make a selection of the gems of Boswell's narrative ; but it is also inevitable that, taken from their setting, they should lose the greatest part of their brilliance. We lose all the quaint semi-conscious touches of character which make the original so fascinating ; and Boswell's absurdities become less amusing when we are able to forget for an instant that the perpetrator is also the narrator. The effort, however, must be made ; and it will be best to premise a brief statement of the external conditions of the life.

From the time of the pension until his death, Johnson was elevated above the fear of poverty. He had a pleasant refuge at the Thrales', where much of his time was spent ; and many friends gathered round him and regarded his utterances with even excessive admiration. He had still frequent periods of profound depression. His diaries reveal an inner life tormented by gloomy forebodings, by remorse for past indolence and futile resolutions of amendment : but he could always escape from himself to a society

of friends and admirers. His abandonment of wine seems to have improved his health and diminished the intensity of his melancholy fits. His literary activity, however, nearly ceased. He wrote a few political pamphlets in defence of Government, and after a long period of indolence managed to complete his last conspicuous work—the *Lives of the Poets*, which was published in 1779 and 1781. One other book of some interest appeared in 1775. It was an account of the journey made with Boswell to the Hebrides in 1773. This journey was in fact the chief interruption to the even tenour of his life. He made a tour to Wales with the Thrales in 1774; and spent a month with them in Paris in 1775. For the rest of the period he lived chiefly in London or at Streatham, making occasional trips to Lichfield and Oxford, or paying visits to Taylor, Langton, and one or two other friends. It was, however, in the London which he loved so ardently ("a man," he said once, "who is tired of London is tired of life"), that he was chiefly conspicuous. There he talked and drank tea illimitably at his friends' houses, or argued and laid down the law to his disciples collected in a tavern instead of Academic groves. Especially he was in all his glory at the Club, which began its meetings in February, 1764, and was afterwards known as the Literary Club. This Club was founded by Sir Joshua Reynolds, "our Romulus," as Johnson called him. The original members were Reynolds, Johnson, Burke, Nugent, Beauclerk, Langton, Goldsmith, Chamier, and Hawkins. They met weekly at the Turk's Head, in Gerard Street, Soho, at seven o'clock, and the talk generally continued till a late hour. The Club was afterwards increased in numbers, and the weekly supper changed to a fortnightly dinner. It continued to thrive, and election to it came to be as great an honour in certain

circles as election to a membership of Parliament. Among the members elected in Johnson's lifetime were Percy of the *Reliques*, Garrick, Sir W. Jones, Boswell, Fox, Steevens, Gibbon, Adam Smith, the Wartons, Sheridan, Dunning, Sir Joseph Banks, Windham, Lord Stowell, Malone, and Dr. Burney. What was best in the conversation at the time was doubtless to be found at its meetings.

Johnson's habitual mode of life is described by Dr. Maxwell, one of Boswell's friends, who made his acquaintance in 1754. Maxwell generally called upon him about twelve, and found him in bed or declaiming over his tea. A levée, chiefly of literary men, surrounded him; and he seemed to be regarded as a kind of oracle to whom every one might resort for advice or instruction. After talking all the morning, he dined at a tavern, staying late and then going to some friend's house for tea, over which he again loitered for a long time. Maxwell is puzzled to know when he could have read or written. The answer seems to be pretty obvious; namely, that after the publication of the *Dictionary* he wrote very little, and that, when he did write, it was generally in a brief spasm of feverish energy. One may understand that Johnson should have frequently reproached himself for his indolence; though he seems to have occasionally comforted himself by thinking that he could do good by talking as well as by writing. He said that a man should have a part of his life to himself; and compared himself to a physician retired to a small town from practice in a great city. Boswell, in spite of this, said that he still wondered that Johnson had not more pleasure in writing than in not writing. "Sir," replied the oracle, "you *may* wonder."

I will now endeavour, with Boswell's guidance, to describe a few of the characteristic scenes which can be fully

enjoyed in his pages alone. The first must be the introduction of Boswell to the sage. Boswell had come to London eager for the acquaintance of literary magnates. He already knew Goldsmith, who had inflamed his desire for an introduction to Johnson. Once when Boswell spoke of Levett, one of Johnson's dependents, Goldsmith had said, "he is poor and honest, which is recommendation enough to Johnson." Another time, when Boswell had wondered at Johnson's kindness to a man of bad character, Goldsmith had replied, "He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson." Boswell had hoped for an introduction through the elder Sheridan; but Sheridan never forgot the contemptuous phrase in which Johnson had referred to his fellow-pensioner. Possibly Sheridan had heard of one other Johnsonian remark. "Why, sir," he had said, "Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, sir, is not in Nature." At another time he said, "Sheridan cannot bear me; I bring his declamation to a point." "What influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover to show light at Calais." Boswell, however, was acquainted with Davies, an actor turned bookseller, now chiefly remembered by a line in Churchill's *Rosciad* which is said to have driven him from the stage—

He mouths a sentence as ours month a bone.

Boswell was drinking tea with Davies and his wife in their back parlour when Johnson came into the shop. Davies, seeing him through the glass-door, announced his approach to Boswell in the spirit of Horatio addressing Hamlet:

"Look, my Lord, it comes!" Davies introduced the young Scotchman, who remembered Johnson's proverbial prejudices. "Don't tell him where I come from!" cried Boswell. "From Scotland," said Davies roguishly. "Mr. Johnson," said Boswell, "I do indeed come from Scotland; but I cannot help it!" "That, sir," was the first of Johnson's many retorts to his worshipper, "is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help."

Poor Boswell was stunned; but he recovered when Johnson observed to Davies, "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." "O, sir," intruded the unlucky Boswell, "I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir," replied Johnson sternly, "I have known David Garrick longer than you have done, and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." The second blow might have crushed a less intrepid curiosity. Boswell, though silenced, gradually recovered sufficiently to listen, and afterwards to note down parts of the conversation. As the interview went on, he even ventured to make a remark or two, which were very civilly received; Davies consoled him at his departure by assuring him that the great man liked him very well. "I cannot conceive a more humiliating position," said Beauclerk on another occasion, "than to be clapped on the back by Tom Davies." For the present, however, even Tom Davies was a welcome encourager to one who, for the rest, was not easily rebuffed. A few days afterwards Boswell ventured a call, was kindly received and detained for some time by "the giant in his den." He was still a little afraid of the said giant, who had shortly before administered a vigorous retort to his

countryman Blair. Blair had asked Johnson whether he thought that any man of a modern age could have written *Ossian*. "Yes, sir," replied Johnson, "many men, many women, and many children." Boswell, however, got on very well, and before long had the high honour of drinking a bottle of port with Johnson at the Mitre, and receiving, after a little autobiographical sketch, the emphatic approval, "Give me your hand, I have taken a liking to you."

In a very short time Boswell was on sufficiently easy terms with Johnson, not merely to frequent his levées but to ask him to dinner at the Mitre. He gathered up, though without the skill of his later performances, some fragments of the conversational feast. The great man aimed another blow or two at Scotch prejudices. To an unlucky compatriot of Boswell's, who claimed for his country a great many "noble wild prospects," Johnson replied, "I believe, sir, you have a great many, Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, sir, let me tell you the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England." Though Boswell makes a slight remonstrance about the "rude grandeur of Nature" as seen in "Caledonia," he sympathized in this with his teacher. Johnson said afterwards, that he never knew any one with "such a gust for London." Before long he was trying Boswell's tastes by asking him in Greenwich Park, "Is not this very fine?" "Yes, sir," replied the promising disciple, "but not equal to Fleet Street." "You are right, sir," said the sage; and Boswell illustrates his dictum by the authority of a "very fashionable baronet," and, moreover, a baronet from Rydal, who declared that the fragrance of a May evening in the country might be very well, but

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that he preferred the smell of a flambeau at the playhouse. In more serious moods Johnson delighted his new disciple by discussions upon theological, social, and literary topics. He argued with an unfortunate friend of Boswell's, whose mind, it appears, had been poisoned by Hume, and who was, moreover, rash enough to undertake the defence of principles of political equality. Johnson's view of all propagators of new opinions was tolerably simple. "Hume, and other sceptical innovators," he said, "are vain men, and will gratify themselves at any expense. Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity; so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull." On another occasion poor Boswell, not yet acquainted with the master's prejudices, quoted with hearty laughter a "very strange" story which Hume had told him of Johnson. According to Hume, Johnson had said that he would stand before a battery of cannon to restore Convocation to its full powers. "And would I not, sir?" thundered out the sage with flashing eyes and threatening gestures. Boswell judiciously bowed to the storm, and diverted Johnson's attention. Another manifestation of orthodox prejudice was less terrible. Boswell told Johnson that he had heard a Quaker woman preach. "A woman's preaching," said Johnson, "is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

So friendly had the pair become, that when Boswell left England to continue his studies at Utrecht, Johnson accompanied him in the stage-coach to Harwich, amusing him on the way by his frankness of address to fellow-passengers, and by the voracity of his appetite. He gave him some excellent advice, remarking of a moth which flut-

tered into a candle, "that creature was its own tormentor, and I believe its name was Boswell." He refuted Berkeley by striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it. As the ship put out to sea Boswell watched him from the deck, whilst he remained "rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner." And so the friendship was cemented, though Boswell disappeared for a time from the scene, travelled on the Continent, and visited Paoli in Corsica. A friendly letter or two kept up the connexion till Boswell returned in 1766, with his head full of Corsica and a projected book of travels.

In the next year, 1767, occurred an incident upon which Boswell dwells with extreme complacency. Johnson was in the habit of sometimes reading in the King's Library, and it came into the head of his majesty that he should like to see the uncouth monster upon whom he had bestowed a pension. In spite of his semi-humorous Jacobitism, there was probably not a more loyal subject in his majesty's dominions. Loyalty is a word too often used to designate a sentiment worthy only of valets, advertising tradesmen, and writers of claptrap articles. But it deserves all respect when it reposes, as in Johnson's case, upon a profound conviction of the value of political subordination, and an acceptance of the king as the authorized representative of a great principle. There was no touch of servility in Johnson's respect for his sovereign, a respect fully reconcilable with a sense of his own personal dignity. Johnson spoke of his interview with an unfeigned satisfaction, which it would be difficult in these days to preserve from the taint of snobbishness. He described it frequently to his friends, and Boswell with pious care ascertained the details from Johnson himself, and from various secondary sources. He contrived afterwards to get his minute

submitted to the King himself, who graciously authorized its publication. When he was preparing his biography, he published this account with the letter to Chesterfield in a small pamphlet sold at a prohibitory price, in order to secure the copyright.

"I find," said Johnson afterwards, "that it does a man good to be talked to by his sovereign. In the first place a man cannot be in a passion." What other advantages he perceived must be unknown, for here the oracle was interrupted. But whatever the advantages, it could hardly be reckoned amongst them, that there would be room for the hearty cut and thrust retorts which enlivened his ordinary talk. To us accordingly the conversation is chiefly interesting as illustrating what Johnson meant by his politeness. He found that the King wanted him to talk, and he talked accordingly. He spoke in a "firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice," and not in the subdued tone customary at formal receptions. He dilated upon various literary topics, on the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, on some contemporary controversies, on the quack Dr. Hill, and upon the reviews of the day. All that is worth repeating is a complimentary passage which shows Johnson's possession of that courtesy which rests upon sense and self-respect. The King asked whether he was writing anything, and Johnson excused himself by saying that he had told the world what he knew for the present, and had "done his part as a writer." "I should have thought so too," said the King, "if you had not written so well." "No man," said Johnson, "could have paid a higher compliment; and it was fit for a King to pay—it was decisive." When asked if he had replied, he said, "No, sir. When the King had said it, it was to be. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my sovereign."

Johnson was not the less delighted. "Sir," he said to the librarian, "they may talk of the King as they will, but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards compared his manners to those of Louis XIV., and his favourite, Charles II. Goldsmith, says Boswell, was silent during the narrative, because (so his kind friend supposed) he was jealous of the honour paid to the dictator. But his natural simplicity prevailed. He ran to Johnson, and exclaimed in 'a kind of flutter,' "Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done, for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it."

The years 1768 and 1769 were a period of great excitement for Boswell. He was carrying on various love affairs, which ended with his marriage in the end of 1769. He was publishing his book upon Corsica and paying homage to Paoli, who arrived in England in the autumn of the same year. The book appeared in the beginning of 1768, and he begs his friend Temple to report all that is said about it, but with the restriction that he is to conceal *all censure*. He particularly wanted Gray's opinion, as Gray was a friend of Temple's. Gray's opinion, not conveyed to Boswell, was expressed by his calling it "a dialogue between a green goose and a hero." Boswell, who was cultivating the society of various eminent people, exclaims triumphantly in a letter to Temple (April 26, 1768), "I am really the great man now." Johnson and Hume had called upon him on the same day, and Garrick, Franklin, and Oglethorpe also partook of his "admirable dinners and good claret." "This," he says, with the sense that he deserved his honours, "is enjoying the fruit of my labours, and appearing like the friend of Paoli." Johnson in vain expressed a wish that he would "empty his head of

Corsica, which had filled it too long." "Empty my head of Corsica! Empty it of honour, empty it of friendship, empty it of piety!" exclaims the ardent youth. The next year accordingly saw Boswell's appearance at the Stratford Jubilee, where he paraded to the admiration of all beholders in a costume described by himself (apparently) in a glowing article in the *London Magazine*. "Is it wrong, sir," he took speedy opportunity of inquiring from the oracle, "to affect singularity in order to make people stare?" "Yes," replied Johnson, "if you do it by propagating error, and indeed it is wrong in any way. There is in human nature a general inclination to make people stare, and every wise man has himself to cure of it, and does cure himself. If you wish to make people stare by doing better than others, why make them stare till they stare their eyes out. But consider how easy it is to make people stare by being absurd"—a proposition which he proceeds to illustrate by examples perhaps less telling than Boswell's recent performance.

The sage was less communicative on the question of marriage, though Boswell had anticipated some "instructive conversation" upon that topic. His sole remark was one from which Boswell "humbly differed." Johnson maintained that a wife was not the worse for being learned. Boswell, on the other hand, defined the proper degree of intelligence to be desired in a female companion by some verses in which Sir Thomas Overbury says that a wife should have some knowledge, and be "by nature wise, not learned much by art." Johnson said afterwards that Mrs. Boswell was in a proper degree inferior to her husband. So far as we can tell, she seems to have been a really sensible and good woman, who kept her husband's absurdities in check, and was, in her way,

a better wife than he deserved. So, happily, are most wives.

Johnson and Boswell had several meetings in 1769. Boswell had the honour of introducing the two objects of his idolatry, Johnson and Paoli, and on another occasion entertained a party including Goldsmith and Garrick and Reynolds, at his lodgings in Old Bond Street. We can still see the meeting more distinctly than many that have been swallowed by a few days of oblivion. They waited for one of the party, Johnson kindly maintaining that six ought to be kept waiting for one, if the one would suffer more by the others sitting down than the six by waiting. Meanwhile Garrick "played round Johnson with a fond vivacity, taking hold of the breasts of his coat, looking up in his face with a lively archness," and complimenting him on his good health. Goldsmith strutted about bragging of his dress, of which Boswell, in the serene consciousness of superiority to such weakness, thought him seriously vain. "Let me tell you," said Goldsmith, "when my tailor brought home my bloom-coloured coat, he said, 'Sir, I have a favour to beg of you; when anybody asks you who made your clothes, be pleased to mention John Filby, at the Harrow, Water Lane.'" "Why, sir," said Johnson, "that was because he knew that the strange colour would attract crowds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour." Mr. Filby has gone the way of all tailors and bloom-coloured coats, but some of his bills are preserved. On the day of this dinner he had delivered to Goldsmith a half-dress suit of ratteen lined with satin, costing twelve guineas, a pair of silk stocking-breeches for £2 5s. and a pair of bloom-coloured ditto for £1 4s. 6d. The

bill, including other items, was paid, it is satisfactory to add, in February, 1771.

The conversation was chiefly literary. Johnson repeated the concluding lines of the *Dunciad*; upon which some one (probably Boswell) ventured to say that they were "too fine for such a poem—a poem on what?" "Why," said Johnson, "on dunces! It was worth while being a dunce then. Ah, sir, hadst *thou* lived in those days!" Johnson previously uttered a criticism which has led some people to think that he had a touch of the dunce in him. He declared that a description of a temple in Congreve's *Mourning Bride* was the finest he knew—finer than anything in Shakspeare. Garrick vainly protested; but Johnson was inexorable. He compared Congreve to a man who had only ten guineas in the world, but all in one coin; whereas Shakspeare might have ten thousand separate guineas. The principle of the criticism is rather curious. "What I mean is," said Johnson, "that you can show me no passage where there is simply a description of material objects, without any admixture of moral notions, which produces such an effect." The description of the night before Agincourt was rejected because there were men in it; and the description of Dover Cliff because the boats and the crows "impede yon fall." They do "not impress your mind at once with the horrible idea of immense height. The impression is divided; you pass on by computation from one stage of the tremendous space to another."

Probably most people will think that the passage in question deserves a very slight fraction of the praise bestowed upon it; but the criticism, like most of Johnson's, has a meaning which might be worth examining abstractedly from the special application which shocks the

idolaters of Shakspeare. Presently the party discussed Mrs. Montagu, whose Essay upon Shakspeare had made some noise. Johnson had a respect for her, caused in great measure by a sense of her liberality to his friend Miss Williams, of whom more must be said hereafter. He paid her some tremendous compliments, observing that some China plates which had belonged to Queen Elizabeth and to her, had no reason to be ashamed of a possessor so little inferior to the first. But he had his usual professional contempt for her amateur performances in literature. Her defence of Shakspeare against Voltaire did her honour, he admitted, but it would do nobody else honour. "No, sir, there is no real criticism in it: none showing the beauty of thought, as formed on the workings of the human heart." Mrs. Montagu was reported once to have complimented a modern tragedian, probably Jephson, by saying, "I tremble for Shakspeare." "When Shakspeare," said Johnson, "has got Jephson for his rival and Mrs. Montagu for his defender, he is in a poor state indeed." The conversation went on to a recently published book, *Kames's Elements of Criticism*, which Johnson praised, whilst Goldsmith said more truly, "It is easier to write that book than to read it." Johnson went on to speak of other critics. "There is no great merit," he said, "in telling how many plays have ghosts in them, and how this ghost is better than that. You must show how terror is impressed on the human heart. In the description of night in *Macbeth* the beetle and the bat detract from the general idea of darkness—inspissated gloom."

After Boswell's marriage he disappeared for some time from London, and his correspondence with Johnson dropped, as he says, without coldness, from pure procrastination. He did not return to London till 1772. In the

spring of that and the following year he renewed his old habits of intimacy, and inquired into Johnson's opinion upon various subjects ranging from ghosts to literary criticism. The height to which he had risen in the doctor's good opinion was marked by several symptoms. He was asked to dine at Johnson's house upon Easter day, 1773; and observes that his curiosity was as much gratified as by a previous dinner with Rousseau in the "wildernefs of Neuf-châtel." He was now able to report, to the amazement of many inquirers, that Johnson's establishment was quite orderly. The meal consisted of very good soup, a boiled leg of lamb with spinach, a veal pie, and a rice pudding. A stronger testimony of good-will was his election, by Johnson's influence, into the Club. It ought apparently to be said that Johnson forced him upon the Club by letting it be understood that, till Boswell was admitted, no other candidate would have a chance. Boswell, however, was, as his proposer said, a thoroughly "clubbable" man, and once a member, his good humour secured his popularity. On the important evening Boswell dined at Beauclerk's with his proposer and some other members. The talk turned upon Goldsmith's merits; and Johnson not only defended his poetry, but preferred him as a historian to Robertson. Such a judgment could be explained in Boswell's opinion by nothing but Johnson's dislike to the Scotch. Once before, when Boswell had mentioned Robertson in order to meet Johnson's condemnation of Scotch literature in general, Johnson had evaded him; "Sir, I love Robertson, and I won't talk of his book." On the present occasion he said that he would give to Robertson the advice offered by an old college tutor to a pupil; "read over your compositions, and whenever you meet with a passage which you think particularly fine, strike it out."

A good anecdote of Goldsmith followed. Johnson had said to him once in the Poet's Corner at Westminster,—

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.

When they got to Temple Bar Goldsmith pointed to the heads of the Jacobites upon it and silyly suggested,—

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.

Johnson next pronounced a critical judgment which should be set against many sins of that kind. He praised the *Pilgrim's Progress* very warmly, and suggested that Bunyan had probably read Spenser.

After more talk the gentlemen went to the Club; and poor Boswell remained trembling with an anxiety which even the charms of Lady Di Beauclerk's conversation could not dissipate. The welcome news of his election was brought; and Boswell went to see Burke for the first time, and to receive a humorous charge from Johnson, pointing out the conduct expected from him as a good member. Perhaps some hints were given as to betrayal of confidence. Boswell seems at any rate to have had a certain reserve in repeating Club talk.

This intimacy with Johnson was about to receive a more public and even more impressive stamp. The antipathy to Scotland and the Scotch already noticed was one of Johnson's most notorious crotchets. The origin of the prejudice was forgotten by Johnson himself, though he was willing to accept a theory started by old Sheridan that it was resentment for the betrayal of Charles I. There is, however, nothing surprising in Johnson's partaking a prejudice common enough from the days of his youth, when each people supposed itself to have been cheated by the

Union, and Englishmen resented the advent of swarms of needy adventurers, talking with a strange accent and hanging together with honourable but vexatious persistence. Johnson was irritated by what was, after all, a natural defence against English prejudice. He declared that the Scotch were always ready to lie on each other's behalf. "The Irish," he said, "are not in a conspiracy to cheat the world by false representations of the merits of their countrymen. No, sir, the Irish are a fair people; they never speak well of one another." There was another difference. He always expressed a generous resentment against the tyranny exercised by English rulers over the Irish people. To some one who defended the restriction of Irish trade for the good of English merchants, he said, "Sir, you talk the language of a savage. What! sir, would you prevent any people from feeding themselves, if by any honest means they can do it?" It was "better to hang or drown people at once," than weaken them by unrelenting persecution. He felt some tenderness for Catholics, especially when oppressed, and a hearty antipathy towards prosperous Presbyterians. The Lowland Scotch were typified by John Knox, in regard to whom he expressed a hope, after viewing the ruins of St. Andrew's, that he was buried "in the highway."

This sturdy British and High Church prejudice did not prevent the worthy doctor from having many warm friendships with Scotchmen, and helping many distressed Scotchmen in London. Most of the amanuenses employed for his *Dictionary* were Scotch. But he nourished the prejudice the more as giving an excellent pretext for many keen gibes. "Scotch learning," he said, for example, "is like bread in a besieged town. Every man gets a mouthful, but no man a bellyful." Once Strahan said in an

swer to some abusive remarks, "Well, sir, God made Scotland." "Certainly," replied Johnson, "but we must always remember that He made it for Scotchmen; and comparisons are odious, Mr. Strahan, but God made hell."

Boswell, therefore, had reason to feel both triumph and alarm when he induced the great man to accompany him in a Scotch tour. Boswell's journal of the tour appeared soon after Johnson's death. Johnson himself wrote an account of it, which is not without interest, though it is in his dignified style, which does not condescend to Boswellian touches of character. In 1773 the Scotch Highlands were still a little known region, justifying a book descriptive of manners and customs, and touching upon antiquities now the commonplaces of innumerable guide books. Scott was still an infant, and the day of enthusiasm, real or affected, for mountain scenery had not yet dawned. Neither of the travellers, as Boswell remarks, cared much for "rural beauties." Johnson says quaintly on the shores of Loch Ness, "It will very readily occur that this uniformity of barrenness can afford very little amusement to the traveller; that it is easy to sit at home and conceive rocks and heath and waterfalls; and that these journeys are useless labours, which neither impregnate the imagination nor enlarge the understanding." And though he shortly afterwards sits down on a bank "such as a writer of romance might have delighted to feign," and there conceived the thought of his book, he does not seem to have felt much enthusiasm. He checked Boswell for describing a hill as "immense," and told him that it was only a "considerable protuberance." Indeed it is not surprising if he sometimes grew weary in long rides upon Highland ponies, or if, when weatherbound in a remote village in Skye, he declared that this was a "wasto of life."

On the whole, however, Johnson bore his fatigues well, preserved his temper, and made sensible remarks upon men and things. The pair started from Edinburgh in the middle of August, 1773; they went north along the eastern coast, through St. Andrew's, Aberdeen, Banff, Fort George, and Inverness. There they took to horses, rode to Glenelg, and took boat for Skye, where they landed on the 2nd of September. They visited Rothesay, Col. Mull, and Iona, and after some dangerous sailing got to the mainland at Oban on October 2nd. Thence they proceeded by Inverary and Loch Lomond to Glasgow; and after paying a visit to Boswell's paternal mansion at Auchinleck in Ayrshire, returned to Edinburgh in November. It were too long to narrate their adventures at length, or to describe in detail how Johnson grieved over traces of the iconoclastic zeal of Knox's disciples, seriously investigated stories of second-sight, cross-examined and brow-beat credulous believers in the authenticity of *Ossian*, and felt his piety grow warm among the ruins of Iona. Once or twice, when the temper of the travellers was tried by the various worries incident to their position, poor Boswell came in for some severe blows. But he was happy, feeling, as he remarks, like a dog who has run away with a large piece of meat, and is devouring it peacefully in a corner by himself. Boswell's spirits were irrepressible. On hearing a drum beat for dinner at Fort George, he says, with a Pepys-like touch, "I for a little while fancied myself a military man, and it pleased me." He got scandalously drunk on one occasion, and showed reprehensible levity on others. He bored Johnson by inquiring too curiously into his reasons for not wearing a nightcap—a subject which seems to have interested him profoundly; he permitted himself to say in his

journal that he was so much pleased with some pretty ladies' maids at the Duke of Argyll's, that he felt he could "have been a knight-errant for them," and his "venerable fellow-traveller" read the passage without censuring his levity. The great man himself could be equally volatile. "*I have often thought,*" he observed one day, to Boswell's amusement, "that if I kept a seraglio, the ladies should all wear linen gowns"—as more cleanly. The pair agreed in trying to stimulate the feudal zeal of various Highland chiefs with whom they came in contact, and who were unreasonable enough to show a hankering after the luxuries of civilization.

Though Johnson seems to have been generally on his best behaviour, he had a rough encounter or two with some of the more civilized natives. Boswell piloted him safely through a visit to Lord Monboddo, a man of real ability, though the proprietor of crochets as eccentric as Johnson's, and consequently divided from him by strong mutual prejudices. At Auchinleck he was less fortunate. The old laird, who was the staunchest of Whigs, had not relished his son's hero-worship. "There is nae hope for Jamie, mon; Jamie is gaen clean gyte. What do you think, mon? He's done wi' Paoli—he's off wi' the land-louping scoundrel of a Corsican, and who's tail do you think he's pinned himself to now, mon?" "Here," says Sir Walter Scott, the authority for the story, "the old judge summoned up a sneer of most sovereign contempt. 'A dominie, mon—an auld dominie—he kept a schüle and caauld it an acaademy.'" The two managed to keep the peace till, one day during Johnson's visit, they got upon Oliver Cromwell. Boswell suppresses the scene with obvious reluctance, his openness being checked for once by filial respect. Scott has fortu-

nately preserved the climax of Old Boswell's argument. "What had Cromwell done for his country?" asked Johnson. "God, doctor, he gart Kings ken that they had a *lith* in their necks" retorted the laird, in a phrase worthy of Mr. Carlyle himself. Scott reports one other scene, at which respectable commentators, like Croker, hold up their hands in horror. Should we regret or rejoice to say that it involves an obvious inaccuracy? The authority, however, is too good to allow us to suppose that it was without some foundation. Adam Smith, it is said, met Johnson at Glasgow and had an altercation with him about the well-known account of Hume's death. As Hume did not die till three years later, there must be some error in this. The dispute, however, whatever its date or subject, ended by Johnson saying to Smith, "*You lie.*" "And what did you reply?" was asked of Smith. "I said, 'you are a son of a —.'" "On such terms," says Scott, "did these two great moralists meet and part, and such was the classical dialogue between these two great teachers of morality."

In the year 1774 Boswell found it expedient to atone for his long absence in the previous year by staying at home. Johnson managed to complete his account of the *Scotch Tour*, which was published at the end of the year. Among other consequences was a violent controversy with the lovers of *Ossian*. Johnson was a thorough sceptic as to the authenticity of the book. His scepticism did not repose upon the philological or antiquarian reasonings, which would be applicable in the controversy from internal evidence. It was to some extent the expression of a general incredulity which astonished his friends, especially when contrasted with his tenderness for many puerile superstitions. He could scarcely be induced to admit the

truth of any narrative which struck him as odd, and it was long, for example, before he would believe even in the Lisbon earthquake. Yet he seriously discussed the truth of second-sight; he carefully investigated the Cock-lane ghost—a goblin who anticipated some of the modern phenomena of so-called “spiritualism,” and with almost equal absurdity; he told stories to Boswell about a “shadowy being” which had once been seen by Cave, and declared that he had once heard his mother call “Sam” when he was at Oxford and she at Lichfield. The apparent inconsistency was in truth natural enough. Any man who clings with unreasonable pertinacity to the prejudices of his childhood, must be alternately credulous and sceptical in excess. In both cases, he judges by his fancies in defiance of evidence; and accepts and rejects according to his likes and dislikes, instead of his estimates of logical proof. *Ossian* would be naturally offensive to Johnson, as one of the earliest and most remarkable manifestations of that growing taste for what was called “Nature,” as opposed to civilization, of which Rousseau was the great mouthpiece. Nobody more heartily despised this form of “cant” than Johnson. A man who utterly despised the scenery of the Hebrides as compared with Greenwich Park or Charing Cross, would hardly take kindly to the Ossianesque version of the mountain passion. The book struck him as sheer rubbish. I have already quoted the retort about “many men, many women, and many children.” “A man,” he said, on another occasion, “might write such stuff for ever, if he would abandon his mind to it.”

The precise point, however, upon which he rested his case, was the tangible one of the inability of Macpherson to produce the manuscripts of which he had affirmed the

existence. Macpherson wrote a furious letter to Johnson, of which the purport can only be inferred from Johnson's smashing retort,—

"Mr. James MacPherson, I have received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian.

"What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture: I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your *Homer*, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

And so laying in a tremendous cudgel, the old gentleman (he was now sixty-six) awaited the assault, which, however, was not delivered.

In 1775 Boswell again came to London, and renewed some of the Scotch discussions. He attended a meeting of the Literary Club, and found the members disposed to laugh at Johnson's tenderness to the stories about second-sight. Boswell heroically avowed his own belief. "The evidence," he said, "is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle, will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief." "Are you?" said Colman; "then cork it up."

It was during this and the next few years that Boswell laboured most successfully in gathering materials for his book. In 1777 he only met Johnson in the country. In

1779, for some unexplained reason, he was lazy in making notes; in 1780 and 1781 he was absent from London; and in the following year, Johnson was visibly declining. The tenour of Johnson's life was interrupted during this period by no remarkable incidents, and his literary activity was not great, although the composition of the *Lives of the Poets* falls between 1777 and 1780. His mind, however, as represented by his talk, was in full vigour. I will take in order of time a few of the passages recorded by Boswell, which may serve for various reasons to afford the best illustration of his character. Yet it may be worth while once more to repeat the warning that such fragments moved from their context must lose most of their charm.

On March 26th (1775), Boswell met Johnson at the house of the publisher, Strahan. Strahan reminded Johnson of a characteristic remark which he had formerly made, that there are "few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money." On another occasion Johnson observed with equal truth, if less originality, that cultivating kindness was an important part of life, as well as money-making. Johnson then asked to see a country lad whom he had recommended to Strahan as an apprentice. He asked for five guineas on account, that he might give one to the boy. "Nay, if a man recommends a boy and does nothing for him, it is sad work." A "little, thick short-legged boy" was accordingly brought into the courtyard, whither Johnson and Boswell descended, and the lexicographer bending himself down administered some good advice to the awe-struck lad with "slow and sonorous solemnity," ending by the presentation of the guinea.

In the evening the pair formed part of a corps of party

"wits," led by Sir Joshua Reynolds, to the benefit of Mrs. Abington, who had been a frequent model of the painter. Johnson praised Garrick's prologues, and Boswell kindly reported the eulogy to Garrick, with whom he supped at Beauclerk's. Garrick treated him to a mimicry of Johnson, repeating, "with pauses and half-whistling," the lines,—

Os homini sublime dedit—cœlumque tueri
Jussit—et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus :

looking downwards, and at the end touching the ground with a contorted gesticulation. Garrick was generally jealous of Johnson's light opinion of him, and used to take off his old master, saying, "Davy has some convivial pleasantry about him, but 'tis a futile fellow."

Next day, at Thrales', Johnson fell foul of Gray, one of his pet aversions. Boswell denied that Gray was dull in poetry. "Sir," replied Johnson, "he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made people think him great. He was a mechanical poet." He proceeded to say that there were only two good stanzas in the *Elegy*. Johnson's criticism was perverse; but if we were to collect a few of the judgments passed by contemporaries upon each other, it would be scarcely exceptional in its want of appreciation. It is rather odd to remark that Gray was generally condemned for obscurity—a charge which seems strangely out of place when he is measured by more recent standards.

A day or two afterwards some one rallied Johnson on his appearance at Mrs. Abington's benefit. "Why did you go?" he asked. "Did you see?" "No, sir." "Did you hear?" "No, sir." "Why, then, sir, did you

go?" "Because, sir, she is a favourite of the public; and when the public cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your benefit too."

The day after, Boswell won a bet from Lady Di Beauclerk by venturing to ask Johnson what he did with the orange-peel which he used to pocket. Johnson received the question amicably, but did not clear the mystery. "Then," said Boswell, "the world must be left in the dark. It must be said, he scraped them, and he let them dry, but what he did with them next he never could be prevailed upon to tell." "Nay, sir," replied Johnson, "you should say it more emphatically—he could not be prevailed upon, even by his dearest friends to tell."

This year Johnson received the degree of LL.D. from Oxford. He had previously (in 1765) received the same honour from Dublin. It is remarkable, however, that familiar as the title has become, Johnson called himself plain Mr. to the end of his days, and was generally so called by his intimates. On April 2nd, at a dinner at Hoole's, Johnson made another assault upon Gray and Mason. When Boswell said that there were good passages in Mason's *Elfrida*, he conceded that there were "now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner." After some more talk, Boswell spoke of the cheerfulness of Fleet Street. "Why, sir," said Johnson, "Fleet Street has a very animated appearance, but I think that the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross." He added a story of an eminent tallow-chandler who had made a fortune in London, and was foolish enough to retire to the country. He grew so tired of his retreat, that he begged to know the melting-days of his successor, that he might be present at the operation.

On April 7th, they dined at a tavern, where the talk turned upon *Ossian*. Some one mentioned as an objection to its authenticity that no mention of wolves occurred in it. Johnson fell into a reverie upon wild beasts, and, whilst Reynolds and Langton were discussing something, he broke out, "Pennant tells of bears." What Pennant told is unknown. The company continued to talk, whilst Johnson continued his monologue, the word "bear" occurring at intervals, like a word in a catch. At last, when a pause came, he was going on: "We are told that the black bear is innocent, but I should not like to trust myself with him." Gibbon muttered in a low tone, "I should not like to trust myself with *you*"—a prudent resolution, says honest Boswell who hated Gibbon, if it referred to a competition of abilities.

The talk went on to patriotism, and Johnson laid down an apophthegm, at "which many will start," many people, in fact, having little sense of humour. Such persons may be reminded for their comfort that at this period patriot had a technical meaning. "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." On the 10th of April, he laid down another dogma, calculated to offend the weaker brethren. He defended Pope's line—

Man never *is* but always *to be* blest.

And being asked if man did not sometimes enjoy a momentary happiness, replied, "Never, but when he is drunk." It would be useless to defend these and other such utterances to any one who cannot enjoy them without defence.

On April 11th, the pair went in Reynolds's coach to dine with Cambridge, at Twickenham. Johnson was in high spirits. He remarked as they drove down, upon the

rarity of good humour in life. One friend mentioned by Boswell was, he said, *acid*, and another *muddy*. At last, stretching himself and turning with complacency, he observed, "I look upon myself as a good-humoured fellow"—a bit of self-esteem against which Boswell protested. Johnson, he admitted, was good-natured; but was too irascible and impatient to be good-humoured. On reaching Cambridge's house, Johnson ran to look at the books. "Mr. Johnson," said Cambridge politely, "I am going with your pardon to accuse myself, for I have the same custom which I perceive you have. But it seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books." "Sir," replied Johnson, wheeling about at the words, "the reason is very plain. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and the backs of books in libraries."

A pleasant talk followed. Johnson denied the value attributed to historical reading, on the ground that we know very little except a few facts and dates. All the colouring, he said, was conjectural. Boswell chuckles over the reflection that Gibbon, who was present, did not take up the cudgels for his favourite study, though the first-fruits of his labours were to appear in the following year. "Probably he did not like to trust himself with Johnson."

The conversation presently turned upon the *Beggar's Opera*, and Johnson sensibly refused to believe that any man had been made a rogue by seeing it. Yet the moralist felt bound to utter some condemnation of such a performance, and at last, amidst the smothered amusement of the company, collected himself to give a heavy stroke:

"there is in it," he said, "such a *labefaction* of all principles as may be dangerous to morality."

A discussion followed as to whether Sheridan was right for refusing to allow his wife to continue as a public singer. Johnson defended him "with all the high spirit of a Roman senator." "He resolved wisely and nobly, to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife sing publicly for hire? No, sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not prepare myself for a public singer as readily as let my wife be one."

The stout old supporter of social authority went on to denounce the politics of the day. He asserted that politics had come to mean nothing but the art of rising in the world. He contrasted the absence of any principles with the state of the national mind during the stormy days of the seventeenth century. This gives the pith of Johnson's political prejudices. He hated Whigs blindly from his cradle; but he justified his hatred on the ground that they were now all "bottomless Whigs," that is to say, that pierce where you would, you came upon no definite creed, but only upon hollow formulæ, intended as a cloak for private interest. If Burke and one or two of his friends be excepted, the remark had but too much justice.

In 1776, Boswell found Johnson rejoicing in the prospect of a journey to Italy with the Thrales. Before starting he was to take a trip to the country, in which Boswell agreed to join. Boswell gathered up various bits of advice before their departure. One seems to have commended itself to him as specially available for practice. "A man who had been drinking freely," said the moralist, "should never go into a new company. He

would probably strike them as ridiculous, though he might be in unison with those who had been drinking with him." Johnson propounded another favourite theory. "A ship," he said, "was worse than a gaol. There is in a gaol better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger."

On March 19th, they went by coach to the Angel at Oxford; and next morning visited the Master of University College, who chose with Boswell to act in opposition to a very sound bit of advice given by Johnson soon afterwards—perhaps with some reference to the proceeding. "Never speak of a man in his own presence; it is always indelicate and may be offensive." The two, however, discussed Johnson without reserve. The Master said that he would have given Johnson a hundred pounds for a discourse on the British Constitution; and Boswell suggested that Johnson should write two volumes of no great bulk upon Church and State, which should comprise the whole substance of the argument. "He should erect a fort on the confines of each." Johnson was not unnaturally displeased with the dialogue, and growled out, "Why should I be always writing?"

Presently, they went to see Dr. Adams, the doctor's old friend, who had been answering Hume. Boswell, who had done his best to court the acquaintance of Voltaire, Rousseau, Wilkes, and Hume himself, felt it desirable to reprove Adams for having met Hume with civility. He aired his admirable sentiments in a long speech, observing upon the connexion between theory and practice, and remarking, by way of practical application, that, if an infidel were at once vain and ugly, he might be compared to "Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue"—which would, as he

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seems to think, be a crushing retort. Boswell always delighted in fighting with his gigantic backer close behind him. Johnson, as he had doubtless expected, chimed in with the argument. "You should do your best," said Johnson, "to diminish the authority, as well as dispute the arguments of your adversary, because most people are biased more by personal respect than by reasoning." "You would not jostle a chimney-sweeper," said Adams. "Yes," replied Johnson, "if it were necessary to jostle him down."

The pair proceeded by post-chaise past Blenheim, and dined at a good inn at Chapelhouse. Johnston boasted of the superiority, long since vanished if it ever existed, of English to French inns, and quoted with great emotion Shenstone's lines—

Who'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
Must sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.

As they drove along rapidly in the post-chaise, he exclaimed, "Life has not many better things than this." On another occasion he said that he should like to spend his life driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman, clever enough to add to the conversation. The pleasure was partly owing to the fact that his deafness was less troublesome in a carriage. But he admitted that there were drawbacks even to this pleasure. Boswell asked him whether he would not add a post-chaise journey to the other sole cause of happiness—namely, drunkenness. "No, sir," said Johnson, "you are driving rapidly *from something or to something*."

They went to Birmingham, where Boswell pumped

Hector about Johnson's early days, and saw the works of Boulton, Watt's partner, who said to him, "I sell here, sir, what all the world desires to have—*power*." Thence they went to Lichfield, and met more of the rapidly thinning circle of Johnson's oldest friends. Here Boswell was a little scandalized by Johnson's warm exclamation on opening a letter—"One of the most dreadful things that has happened in my time!" This turned out to be the death of Thrale's only son. Boswell thought the phrase too big for the event, and was some time before he could feel a proper concern. He was, however, "curious to observe how Dr. Johnson would be affected," and was again a little scandalized by the reply to his consolatory remark that the Thrales still had daughters. "Sir," said Johnson, "don't you know how you yourself think? Sir, he wishes to propagate his name." The great man was actually putting the family sentiment of a brewer in the same category with the sentiments of the heir of Auchinleck. Johnson, however, calmed down, but resolved to hurry back to London. They stayed a night at Taylor's, who remarked that he had fought a good many battles for a physician, one of their common friends. "But you should consider, sir," said Johnson, "that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for every man of whom you get the better will be very angry, and resolve not to employ him, whereas if people get the better of you in argument about him, they will think 'We'll send for Dr. — nevertheless!'"

It was after their return to London that Boswell won the greatest triumph of his friendship. He carried through a negotiation, to which, as Burke pleasantly said, there was nothing equal in the whole history of the *corps diplomatique*. At some moment of enthusiasm it had occurred

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to him to bring Johnson into company with Wilkes. The infidel demagogue was probably in the mind of the Tory High Churchman, when he threw out that pleasant little apophthegm about patriotism. To bring together two such opposites without provoking a collision would be the crowning triumph of Boswell's curiosity. He was ready to run all hazards as a chemist might try some new experiment at the risk of a destructive explosion; but being resolved, he took every precaution with admirable foresight.

Boswell had been invited by the Dillys, well-known booksellers of the day, to meet Wilkes. "Let us have Johnson," suggested the gallant Boswell. "Not for the world!" exclaimed Dilly. But, on Boswell's undertaking the negotiation, he consented to the experiment. Boswell went off to Johnson and politely invited him in Dilly's name. "I will wait upon him," said Johnson. "Provided, sir, I suppose," said the diplomatic Boswell, "that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you." "What do you mean, sir?" exclaimed Johnson. "What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" Boswell worked the point a little farther, till, by judicious manipulation, he had got Johnson to commit himself to meeting anybody—even Jack Wilkes, to make a wild hypothesis—at the Dillys' table. Boswell retired, hoping to think that he had fixed the discussion in Johnson's mind.

The great day arrived, and Boswell, like a consummate general who leaves nothing to chance, went himself to fetch Johnson to the dinner. The great man had forgotten the engagement, and was "buffeting his books" in a dirty shirt and amidst clouds of dust. When reminded

of his promise, he said that he had ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams. Entreaties of the warmest kind from Boswell softened the peevish old lady, to whose pleasure Johnson had referred him. Boswell flew back, announced Mrs. Williams's consent, and Johnson roared, "Frank, a clean shirt!" and was soon in a hackney-coach. Boswell rejoiced like a "fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green." Yet the joy was with trembling. Arrived at Dillys', Johnson found himself amongst strangers, and Boswell watched anxiously from a corner. "Who is that gentleman?" whispered Johnson to Dilly. "Mr. Arthur Lee." Johnson whistled "too-too-too" doubtfully, for Lee was a patriot and an American. "And who is the gentleman in lace?" "Mr. Wilkes, sir." Johnson subsided into a window-seat and fixed his eye on a book. He was fairly in the toils. His reproof of Boswell was recent enough to prevent him from exhibiting his displeasure, and he resolved to restrain himself.

At dinner Wilkes, placed next to Johnson, took up his part in the performance. He pacified the sturdy moralist by delicate attentions to his needs. He helped him carefully to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, sir; it is better here—a little of the brown—some fat, sir—a little of the stuffing—some gravy—let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter. Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange; or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest." "Sir, sir," cried Johnson, "I am obliged to you, sir," bowing and turning to him, with a look for some time of "sunny virtue," and soon of complacency.

Gradually the conversation became cordial. Johnson told of the fascination exercised by Foote, who, like Wilkes, had succeeded in pleasing him against his will.

Foote once took to selling beer, and it was so bad that the servants of Fitzherbert, one of his customers, resolved to protest. They chose a little black boy to carry their remonstrance; but the boy waited at table one day when Foote was present, and returning to his companions, said, "This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message; I will drink his beer." From Foote the transition was easy to Garrick, whom Johnson, as usual, defended against the attacks of others. He maintained that Garrick's reputation for avarice, though unfounded, had been rather useful than otherwise. "You despise a man for avarice, but you do not hate him." The clamour would have been more effectual, had it been directed against his living with splendour too great for a player. Johnson went on to speak of the difficulty of getting biographical information. When he had wished to write a life of Dryden, he applied to two living men who remembered him. One could only tell him that Dryden had a chair by the fire at Will's Coffee-house in winter, which was moved to the balcony in summer. The other (Cibber) could only report that he remembered Dryden as a "decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's."

Johnson and Wilkes had one point in common—a vigorous prejudice against the Scotch, and upon this topic they cracked their jokes in friendly emulation. When they met upon a later occasion (1781), they still pursued this inexhaustible subject. Wilkes told how a privateer had completely plundered seven Scotch islands, and embarked with three and sixpence. Johnson now remarked in answer to somebody who said "Poor old England is lost!" "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it."

"You must know, sir," he said to Wilkes, "that I lately took my friend Boswell and showed him genuine civilized life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, that he might see for once real civility, for you know he lives among savages in Scotland and among rakes in London." "Except," said Wilkes, "when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me." "And we ashamed of him," added Johnson, smiling.

Boswell had to bear some jokes against himself and his countrymen from the pair; but he had triumphed, and rejoiced greatly when he went home with Johnson, and heard the great man speak of his pleasant dinner to Mrs. Williams. Johnson seems to have been permanently reconciled to his foe. "Did we not hear so much said of Jack Wilkes," he remarked next year, "we should think more highly of his conversation. Jack has a great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But, after hearing his name sounded from pole to pole as the phoenix of convivial felicity, we are disappointed in his company. He has always been at *me*, but I would do Jack a kindness rather than not. The contest is now over."

In fact, Wilkes had ceased to play any part in public life. When Johnson met him next (in 1781) they joked about such dangerous topics as some of Wilkes's political performances. Johnson sent him a copy of the *Lives*, and they were seen conversing *tête-à-tête* in confidential whispers about George II. and the King of Prussia. To Boswell's mind it suggested the happy days when the lion should lie down with the kid, or, as Dr. Barnard suggested, the goat.

In the year 1777 Johnson began the *Lives of the Poets*, in compliance with a request from the booksellers, who

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wished for prefaces to a large collection of English poetry. Johnson asked for this work the extremely modest sum of 200 guineas, when he might easily, according to Malone, have received 1000 or 1500. He did not meet Boswell till September, when they spent ten days together at Dr. Taylor's. The subject which specially interested Boswell at this time was the fate of the unlucky Dr. Dodd, hanged for forgery in the previous June. Dodd seems to have been a worthless charlatan of the popular preacher variety. His crime would not in our days have been thought worthy of so severe a punishment; but his contemporaries were less shocked by the fact of death being inflicted for such a fault, than by the fact of its being inflicted on a clergyman. Johnson exerted himself to procure a remission of the sentence by writing various letters and petitions on Dodd's behalf. He seems to have been deeply moved by the man's appeal, and could "not bear the thought" that any negligence of his should lead to the death of a fellow-creature; but he said that if he had himself been in authority he would have signed the death-warrant, and for the man himself, he had as little respect as might be. He said, indeed, that Dodd was right in not joining in the "cant" about leaving a wretched world. "No, no," said the poor rogue, "it has been a very agreeable world to me." Dodd had allowed to pass for his own one of the papers composed for him by Johnson, and the Doctor was not quite pleased. When, however, Seward expressed a doubt as to Dodd's power of writing so forcibly, Johnson felt bound not to expose him. "Why should you think so? Depend upon it, sir, when any man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully." On another occasion, Johnson expressed a doubt

himself as to whether Dodd had really composed a certain prayer on the night before his execution. "Sir, do you think that a man the night before he is to be hanged cares for the succession of the royal family? Though he *may* have composed this prayer then. A man who has been canting all his life may cant to the last; and yet a man who has been refused a pardon after so much petitioning, would hardly be praying thus fervently for the king."

The last day at Taylor's was characteristic. Johnson was very cordial to his disciple, and Boswell fancied that he could defend his master at "the point of his sword." "My regard for you," said Johnson, "is greater almost than I have words to express, but I do not choose to be always repeating it. Write it down in the first leaf of your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again." They became sentimental, and talked of the misery of human life. Boswell spoke of the pleasures of society. "Alas, sir," replied Johnson, like a true pessimist, "these are only struggles for happiness!" He felt exhilarated, he said, when he first went to Ranelagh, but he changed to the mood of Xerxes weeping at the sight of his army. "It went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think; but that the thoughts of each individual would be distressing when alone." Some years before he had gone with Boswell to the Pantheon and taken a more cheerful view. When Boswell doubted whether there were many happy people present, he said, "Yes, sir, there are many happy people here. There are many people here who are watching hundreds, and who think hundreds are watching them." The more permanent feeling was that which he expressed in the "serene autumn night" in Taylor's garden. He was willing, however, to talk

calmly about eternal punishment, and to admit the possibility of a "mitigated interpretation."

After supper he dictated to Boswell an argument in favour of the negro who was then claiming his liberty in Scotland. He hated slavery with a zeal which the excellent Boswell thought to be "without knowledge;" and on one occasion gave as a toast to some "very grave men" at Oxford, "Here's to the next insurrection of negroes in the West Indies." The hatred was combined with as hearty a dislike for American independence. "How is it," he said, "that we always hear the loudest yelps for liberty amongst the drivers of negroes?" The harmony of the evening was unluckily spoilt by an explosion of this prejudice. Boswell undertook the defence of the colonists, and the discussion became so fierce that though Johnson had expressed a willingness to sit up all night with him, they were glad to part after an hour or two, and go to bed.

In 1778, Boswell came to London and found Johnson absorbed, to an extent which apparently excited his jealousy, by his intimacy with the Thrales. They had, however, several agreeable meetings. One was at the club, and Boswell's report of the conversation is the fullest that we have of any of its meetings. A certain reserve is indicated by his using initials for the interlocutors, of whom, however, one can be easily identified as Burke. The talk began by a discussion of an antique statue, said to be the dog of Alcibiades, and valued at 1000*l*. Burke said that the representation of no animal could be worth so much. Johnson, whose taste for art was a vanishing quantity, said that the value was proportional to the difficulty. A statue, as he argued on another occasion, would be worth nothing if it were cut out of a carrot. Every-

thing, he now said, was valuable which "enlarged the sphere of human powers." The first man who balanced a straw upon his nose, or rode upon three horses at once, deserved the applause of mankind; and so statues of animals should be preserved as a proof of dexterity, though men should not continue such fruitless labours.

The conversation became more instructive under the guidance of Burke. He maintained what seemed to his hearers a paradox, though it would be interesting to hear his arguments from some profounder economist than Boswell, that a country would be made more populous by emigration. "There are bulls enough in Ireland," he remarked incidentally in the course of the argument. "So, sir, I should think from your argument," said Johnson, for once condescending to an irresistible pun. It is recorded, too, that he once made a bull himself, observing that a horse was so slow that when it went up hill, it stood still. If he now failed to appreciate Burke's argument, he made one good remark. Another speaker said that unhealthy countries were the most populous. "Countries which are the most populous," replied Johnson, "have the most destructive diseases. That is the true state of the proposition;" and indeed, the remark applies to the case of emigration.

A discussion then took place as to whether it would be worth while for Burke to take so much trouble with speeches which never decided a vote. Burke replied that a speech, though it did not gain one vote, would have an influence, and maintained that the House of Commons was not wholly corrupt. "We are all more or less governed by interest," was Johnson's comment. "But interest will not do everything. In a case which admits of doubt, we try to think on the side which is for our inte-

rest, and generally bring ourselves to act accordingly. But the subject must admit of diversity of colouring; it must receive a colour on that side. In the House of Commons there are members enough who will not vote what is grossly absurd and unjust. No, sir, there must always be right enough, or appearance of right, to keep wrong in countenance." After some deviations, the conversation returned to this point. Johnson and Burke agreed on a characteristic statement. Burke said that from his experience he had learnt to think better of mankind. "From my experience," replied Johnson, "I have found them worse on commercial dealings, more disposed to cheat than I had any notion of; but more disposed to do one another good than I had conceived." "Less just, and more beneficent," as another speaker suggested. Johnson proceeded to say that considering the pressure of want, it was wonderful that men would do so much for each other. The greatest liar is said to speak more truth than falsehood, and perhaps the worst man might do more good than not. But when Boswell suggested that perhaps experience might increase our estimate of human happiness, Johnson returned to his habitual pessimism. "No, sir, the more we inquire, the more we shall find men less happy." The talk soon wandered off into a disquisition upon the folly of deliberately testing the strength of our friend's affection.

The evening ended by Johnson accepting a commission to write to a friend who had given to the Club a hogshead of claret, and to request another, with "a happy ambiguity of expression," in the hopes that it might also be a present.

Some days afterwards, another conversation took place, which has a certain celebrity in Boswellian literature. The scene was at Dilly's, and the guests included Miss

Seward and Mrs. Knowles, a well-known Quaker Lady. Before dinner Johnson seized upon a book which he kept in his lap during dinner, wrapped up in the table-cloth. His attention was not distracted from the various business of the hour, but he hit upon a topic which happily combined the two appropriate veins of thought. He boasted that he would write a cookery-book upon philosophical principles; and declared in opposition to Miss Seward that such a task was beyond the sphere of woman. Perhaps this led to a discussion upon the privileges of men, in which Johnson put down Mrs. Knowles, who had some hankering for women's rights, by the Shakspearian maxim that if two men ride on a horse, one must ride behind. Driven from her position in this world, poor Mrs. Knowles hoped that sexes might be equal in the next. Boswell reproved her by the remark already quoted, that men might as well expect to be equal to angels. He enforces this view by an illustration suggested by the "Rev. Mr. Brown of Utrecht," who had observed that a great or small glass might be equally full, though not holding equal quantities. Mr. Brown intended this for a confutation of Hume, who has said that a little Miss, dressed for a ball, may be as happy as an orator who has won some triumphant success.¹

The conversation thus took a theological turn, and Mrs. Knowles was fortunate enough to win Johnson's high approval. He defended a doctrine maintained by Soame Jenyns, that friendship is not a Christian virtue. Mrs. Knowles remarked that Jesus had twelve disciples,

¹ Boswell remarks as a curious coincidence that the same illustration had been used by a Dr. King, a dissenting minister. Doubtless it has been used often enough. For one instance see *Donne's Sermons* (Alford's Edition), vol. I, p. 5.

but there was *one* whom he *loved*. Johnson, "with eyes sparkling benignantly," exclaimed, "Very well indeed, madam ; you have said very well !"

So far all had gone smoothly ; but here, for some inexplicable reason, Johnson burst into a sudden fury against the American rebels, whom he described as "rascals, robbers, pirates," and roared out a tremendous volley, which might almost have been audible across the Atlantic. Boswell sat and trembled, but gradually diverted the sage to less exciting topics. The name of Jonathan Edwards suggested a discussion upon free will and necessity, upon which poor Boswell was much given to worry himself. Some time afterwards Johnson wrote to him, in answer to one of his lamentations : "I hoped you had got rid of all this hypocrisy of misery. What have you to do with liberty and necessity ? Or what more than to hold your tongue about it ?" Boswell could never take this sensible advice ; but he got little comfort from his oracle. "We know that we are all free, and there's an end on't," was his statement on one occasion, and now he could only say, "All theory is against the freedom of the will, and all experience for it."

Some familiar topics followed, which play a great part in Boswell's reports. Among the favourite topics of the sentimentalists of the day was the denunciation of "luxury," and of civilized life in general. There was a disposition to find in the South Sea savages or American Indians an embodiment of the fancied state of nature. Johnson heartily despised the affectation. He was told of an American woman who had to be bound in order to keep her from savage life. "She must have been an animal, a beast," said Boswell. "Sir," said Johnson, "she was a speaking cat." Somebody quoted

to him with admiration the soliloquy of an officer who had lived in the wilds of America: "Here am I, free and unrestrained, amidst the rude magnificence of nature, with the Indian woman by my side, and this gun, with which I can procure food when I want it! What more can be desired for human happiness?" "Do not allow yourself", sir," replied Johnson, "to be imposed upon by such gross absurdity. It is sad stuff; it is brutish. If a bull could speak, he might as well exclaim, 'Here am I with this cow and this grass; what being can enjoy greater felicity?'" When Johnson implored Boswell to "clear his mind of cant," he was attacking his disciple for affecting a serious depression about public affairs; but the cant which he hated would certainly have included as its first article an admiration for the state of nature.

On the present occasion Johnson defended luxury, and said that he had learnt much from Mandeville—a shrewd cynic, in whom Johnson's hatred for humbug is exaggerated into a general disbelief in real as well as sham nobleness of sentiment. As the conversation proceeded, Johnson expressed his habitual horror of death, and caused Miss Seward's ridicule by talking seriously of ghosts and the importance of the question of their reality; and then followed an explosion, which seems to have closed this characteristic evening. A young woman had become a Quaker under the influence of Mrs. Knowles, who now proceeded to deprecate Johnson's wrath at what he regarded as an apostasy. "Madam," he said, "she is an odious wench," and he proceeded to denounce her audacity in presuming to choose a religion for herself. "She knew no more of the points of difference," he said, "than of the difference between the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems." When Mrs. Knowles said that she

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had the New Testament before her, he said that it was the "most difficult book in the world," and he proceeded to attack the unlucky proselyte with a fury which shocked the two ladies. Mrs. Knowles afterwards published a report of this conversation, and obtained another report, with which, however, she was not satisfied, from Miss Seward. Both of them represent the poor doctor as hopelessly confuted by the mild dignity and calm reason of Mrs. Knowles, though the triumph is painted in far the brightest colours by Mrs. Knowles herself. Unluckily, there is not a trace of Johnson's manner, except in one phrase, in either report, and they are chiefly curious as an indirect testimony to Boswell's superior powers. The passage, in which both the ladies agree, is that Johnson, on the expression of Mrs. Knowles's hope that he would meet the young lady in another world, retorted that he was not fond of meeting fools anywhere.

Poor Boswell was at this time a water-drinker by Johnson's recommendation, though unluckily for himself he never broke off his drinking habits for long. They had a conversation at Paoli's, in which Boswell argued against his present practice. Johnson remarked "that wine gave a man nothing, but only put in motion what had been locked up in frost." It was a key, suggested some one, which opened a box, but the box might be full or empty. "Nay, sir," said Johnson, "conversation is the key, wine is a picklock, which forces open the box and injures it. A man should cultivate his mind, so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine which wine gives." Boswell characteristically said that the great difficulty was from "benevolence." It was hard to refuse "a good, worthy man" who asked you to try his cellar. This, according

to Johnson, was mere conceit, implying an exaggerated estimate of your importance to your entertainer. Reynolds gallantly took up the opposite side, and produced the one recorded instance of a Johnsonian blush. "I won't argue any more with you, sir," said Johnson, who thought every man to be elevated who drank wine, "you are too far gone." "I should have thought so indeed, sir, had I made such a speech as you have now done," said Reynolds; and Johnson apologized with the aforesaid blush.

The explosion was soon over on this occasion. Not long afterwards, Johnson attacked Boswell so fiercely at a dinner at Reynolds's, that the poor disciple kept away for a week. They made it up when they met next, and Johnson solaced Boswell's wounded vanity by highly commending an image made by him to express his feelings. "I don't care how often or how high Johnson tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground; but I do not like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present." The phrase may recall one of Johnson's happiest illustrations. When some one said in his presence that a *congé d'élire* might be considered as only a strong recommendation: "Sir," replied Johnson, "it is such a recommendation as if I should throw you out of a two-pair of stairs window, and recommend you to fall soft."

It is perhaps time to cease these extracts from Boswell's reports. The next two years were less fruitful. In 1779 Boswell was careless, though twice in London, and in 1780, he did not pay his annual visit. Boswell has partly filled up the gap by a collection of sayings made by Langton, some passages from which have been quoted, and his correspondence gives various details. Garrick died in January of 1779, and Beauclerk in

March, 1780. Johnson himself seems to have shown few symptoms of increasing age; but a change was approaching, and the last years of his life were destined to be clouded, not merely by physical weakness, but by a change of circumstances which had great influence upon his happiness.

CHAPTER V.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF JOHNSON'S LIFE.

IN following Boswell's guidance we have necessarily seen only one side of Johnson's life; and probably that side which had least significance for the man himself.

Boswell saw in him chiefly the great dictator of conversation; and though the reports of Johnson's talk represent his character in spite of some qualifications with unusual fulness, there were many traits very inadequately revealed at the Mitre or the Club, at Mrs. Thrale's, or in meetings with Wilkes or Reynolds. We may catch some glimpses from his letters and diaries of that inward life which consisted generally in a long succession of struggles against an oppressive and often paralysing melancholy. Another most noteworthy side to his character is revealed in his relations to persons too humble for admission to the tables at which he exerted a despotic sway. Upon this side Johnson was almost entirely loveable. We often have to regret the imperfection of the records of

That best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.

Everywhere in Johnson's letters and in the occasional anecdotes, we come upon indications of a tenderness and untiring benevolence which would make us forgive

far worse faults than have ever been laid to his charge. Nay, the very asperity of the man's outside becomes endeared to us by the association. His irritability never vented itself against the helpless, and his rough impatience of fanciful troubles implied no want of sympathy for real sorrow. One of Mrs. Thrale's anecdotes is intended to show Johnson's harshness:—"When I one day lamented the loss of a first cousin killed in America, 'Pr'ythee, my dear,' said he, 'have done with canting; how would the world be the worse for it, I may ask, if all your relations were at once spitted like larks and roasted for Presto's supper?' Presto was the dog that lay under the table while we talked." The counter version, given by Boswell is, that Mrs. Thrale related her cousin's death in the midst of a hearty supper, and that Johnson, shocked at her want of feeling, said, "Madam, it would give *you* very little concern if all your relations were spitted like those larks, and roasted for Presto's supper." Taking the most unfavourable version, we may judge how much real indifference to human sorrow was implied by seeing how Johnson was affected by a loss of one of his humblest friends. It is but one case of many. In 1767, he took leave, as he notes in his diary, of his "dear old friend, Catherine Chambers," who had been for about forty-three years in the service of his family. "I desired all to withdraw," he says, "then told her that we were to part for ever, and, as Christians, we should part with prayer, and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me, and held up her poor hands as she lay in bed, with great fervour, while I prayed, kneeling by her, in nearly the following words"—which shall not be repeated here—"I then kissed her," he adds. "She told me that to part was the greatest pain

that she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes, and great emotion of kindness, the same hopes. We kissed and parted—I humbly hope to meet again and part no more."

A man with so true and tender a heart could say serenely, what with some men would be a mere excuse for want of sympathy, that he "hated to hear people whine about metaphysical distresses when there was so much want and hunger in the world." He had a sound and righteous contempt for all affectation of excessive sensibility. Suppose, said Boswell to him, whilst their common friend Baretto was lying under a charge of murder, "that one of your intimate friends were apprehended for an offence for which he might be hanged." "I should do what I could," replied Johnson, "to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged, I should not suffer." "Would you eat your dinner that day, sir?" asks Boswell. "Yes, sir; and eat it as if he were eating with me. Why there's Baretto, who's to be tried for his life to-morrow. Friends have risen up for him upon every side; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plum-pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind." Boswell illustrated the subject by saying that Tom Davies had just written a letter to Foote, telling him that he could not sleep from concern about Baretto, and at the same time recommending a young man who kept a pickle-shop. Johnson summed up by the remark: "You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*." Johnson never objected to feeling, but to the waste of feeling.

In a similar vein he told Mrs. Thrale that a "surly fel

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low" like himself had no compassion to spare for "wounds given to vanity and softness," whilst witnessing the common sight of actual want in great cities. On Lady Tavistock's death, said to have been caused by grief for her husband's loss, he observed that her life might have been saved if she had been put into a small chandler's shop, with a child to nurse. When Mrs. Thrale suggested that a lady would be grieved because her friend had lost the chance of a fortune, "She will suffer as much, perhaps," he replied, "as your horse did when your cow miscarried." Mrs. Thrale testifies that he once reproached her sternly for complaining of the dust. When he knew, he said, how many poor families would perish next winter for want of the bread which the drought would deny, he could not bear to hear ladies sighing for rain on account of their complexions or their clothes. While reporting such sayings, she adds, that he loved the poor as she never saw any one else love them, with an earnest desire to make them happy. His charity was unbounded; he proposed to allow himself one hundred a year out of the three hundred of his pension; but the Thrales could never discover that he really spent upon himself more than 70*l.*, or at most 80*l.* He had numerous dependants, abroad as well as at home, who "did not like to see him latterly, unless he brought 'em money." He filled his pockets with small cash which he distributed to beggars in defiance of political economy. When told that the recipients only laid it out upon gin or tobacco, he replied that it was savage to deny them the few coarse pleasures which the richer disdained. Numerous instances are given of more judicious charity. When, for example, a Benedictine monk, whom he had seen in Paris, became a Protestant, Johnson supported him for some months in London, till he could get a living

Once coming home late at night, he found a poor woman lying in the street. He carried her to his house on his back, and found that she was reduced to the lowest stage of want, poverty, and disease. He took care of her at his own charge, with all tenderness, until she was restored to health, and tried to have her put into a virtuous way of living. His house, in his later years, was filled with various waifs and strays, to whom he gave hospitality and sometimes support, defending himself by saying that if he did not help them nobody else would. The head of his household was Miss Williams, who had been a friend of his wife's, and after coming to stay with him, in order to undergo an operation for cataract, became a permanent inmate of his house. She had a small income of some 40*l.* a year, partly from the charity of connexions of her father's, and partly arising from a little book of miscellanies published by subscription. She was a woman of some sense and cultivation, and when she died (in 1783) Johnson said that for thirty years she had been to him as a sister. Boswell's jealousy was excited during the first period of his acquaintance, when Goldsmith one night went home with Johnson, crying "I go to Miss Williams"—a phrase which implied admission to an intimacy from which Boswell was as yet excluded. Boswell soon obtained the coveted privilege, and testifies to the respect with which Johnson always treated the inmates of his family. Before leaving her to dine with Boswell at the hotel, he asked her what little delicacy should be sent to her from the tavern. Poor Miss Williams, however, was peevish, and, according to Hawkins, had been known to drive Johnson out of the room by her reproaches, and Boswell's delicacy was shocked by the supposition that she tested the fulness of cups of tea, by putting her finger inside. We are

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glad to know that this was a false impression, and, in fact, Miss Williams, however unfortunate in temper and circumstances, seems to have been a lady by manners and education.

The next inmate of this queer household was Robert Levett, a man who had been a waiter at a coffee-house in Paris frequented by surgeons. They had enabled him to pick up some of their art, and he set up as an "obscure practiser in physic amongst the lower people" in London. He took from them such fees as he could get, including provisions, sometimes, unfortunately for him, of the potable kind. He was once entrapped into a queer marriage, and Johnson had to arrange a separation from his wife. Johnson, it seems, had a good opinion of his medical skill, and more or less employed his services in that capacity. He attended his patron at his breakfast; breakfasting, said Percy, "on the crust of a roll, which Johnson threw to him after tearing out the crumb." The phrase, it is said, goes too far; Johnson always took pains that Levett should be treated rather as a friend than as a dependant.

Besides these humble friends, there was a Mrs. Desmoulins, the daughter of a Lichfield physician. Johnson had had some quarrel with the father in his youth for revealing a confession of the mental disease which tortured him from early years. He supported Mrs. Desmoulins none the less, giving house-room to her and her daughter, and making her an allowance of half-a-guinea a week, a sum equal to a twelfth part of his pension. Francis Barber has already been mentioned, and we have a dim vision of a Miss Carmichael, who completed what he facetiously called his "seraglio." It was anything but a happy family. He summed up their relations in a letter

to Mrs. Thrale. "Williams," he says, "hates everybody ; Levett hates Desmoulins, and does not love Williams ; Desmoulins hates them both ; Poll (Miss Carmichael) loves none of them." Frank Barber complained of Miss Williams's authority, and Miss Williams of Frank's insubordination. Intruders who had taken refuge under his roof, brought their children there in his absence, and grumbled if their dinners were ill-dressed. The old man bore it all, relieving himself by an occasional growl, but reproaching any who ventured to join in the growl for their indifference to the sufferings of poverty. Levett died in January, 1782 ; Miss Williams died, after a lingering illness, in 1783, and Johnson grieved in solitude for the loss of his testy companions. A poem, composed upon Levett's death, records his feelings in language which wants the refinement of Goldsmith or the intensity of Cowper's pathos, but which is yet so sincere and tender as to be more impressive than far more elegant compositions. It will be a fitting close to this brief indication of one side of Johnson's character, too easily overlooked in Boswell's pages, to quote the part of what Thackeray truly calls the "sacred verses" upon Levett:—

Well tried through many a varying year
See Levett to the grave descend,
Officious, innocent, sincere,
Of every friendless name the friend.

In misery's darkest cavern known,
His ready help was ever nigh ;
Where hopeless anguish pour'd his groans,
And lonely want retired to die.

No summons mock'd by dull delay,
No petty gains disdain'd by pride ;
The modest wants of every day,
The toil of every day supplied.

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His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
 Nor made a pause, nor left a void ;
 And sure the eternal Master found
 His single talent well employ'd.

The busy day, the peaceful night,
 Unfelt, uncounted, glided by ;
 His frame was firm, his eye was bright,
 Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then, with no throbs of fiery pain,
 No cold gradations of decay,
 Death broke at once the vital chain,
 And freed his soul the easiest way.

The last stanza smells somewhat of the country tombstone ; but to read the whole and to realize the deep, manly sentiment which it implies, without tears in one's eyes is to me at least impossible.

There is one little touch which may be added before we proceed to the closing years of this tender-hearted old moralist. Johnson loved little children, calling them "little dears," and cramming them with sweetmeats, though we regret to add that he once snubbed a little child rather severely for a want of acquaintance with the *Pilgrim's Progress*. His cat, Hodge, should be famous amongst the lovers of the race. He used to go out and buy oysters for Hodge, that the servants might not take a dislike to the animal from having to serve it themselves. He reproached his wife for beating a cat before the maid, lest she should give a precedent for cruelty. Boswell, who cherished an antipathy to cats, suffered at seeing Hodge scrambling up Johnson's breast, whilst he smiled and rubbed the beast's back and pulled its tail. Boszy remarked that he was a fine cat. "Why, yes, sir," said Johnson ; "but I have had cats whom I liked better

than this," and then, lest Hodge should be put out of countenance, he added, "but he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed." He told Langton once of a young gentleman who, when last heard of, was "running about town shooting cats; but," he murmured in a kindly reverie, "Hodge shan't be shot; no, no, Hodge shall not be shot!" Once, when Johnson was staying at a house in Wales, the gardener brought in a hare which had been caught in the potatoes. The order was given to take it to the cook. Johnson asked to have it placed in his arms. He took it to the window and let it go, shouting to increase its speed. When his host complained that he had perhaps spoilt the dinner, Johnson replied by insisting that the rights of hospitality included an animal which had thus placed itself under the protection of the master of the garden.

We must proceed, however, to a more serious event. The year 1781 brought with it a catastrophe which profoundly affected the brief remainder of Johnson's life. Mr. Thrale, whose health had been shaken by fits, died suddenly on the 4th of April. The ultimate consequence was Johnson's loss of the second home, in which he had so often found refuge from melancholy, alleviation of physical suffering, and pleasure in social converse. The change did not follow at once, but as the catastrophe of a little social drama, upon the rights and wrongs of which a good deal of controversy has been expended.

Johnson was deeply affected by the loss of a friend whose face, as he said, "had never been turned upon him through fifteen years but with respect and benignity." He wrote solemn and affecting letters to the widow, and busied himself strenuously in her service. Thrale had made him one of his executors, leaving him a small

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legacy; and Johnson took, it seems, a rather simple-minded pleasure in dealing with important commercial affairs and signing cheques for large sums of money. The old man of letters, to whom three hundred a year had been superabundant wealth, was amused at finding himself in the position of a man of business, regulating what was then regarded as a princely fortune. The brewery was sold after a time, and Johnson bustled about with an ink-horn and pen in his button-hole. When asked what was the value of the property, he replied magniloquently, "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice." The brewery was in fact sold to Barclay, Perkins, and Co. for the sum of 135,000*l.*, and some years afterwards it was the largest concern of the kind in the world.

The first effect of the change was probably rather to tighten than to relax the bond of union with the Thrale family. During the winter of 1781-2, Johnson's infirmities were growing upon him. In the beginning of 1782 he was suffering from an illness which excited serious apprehensions, and he went to Mrs. Thrale's, as the only house where he could use "all the freedom that sickness requires." She nursed him carefully, and expressed her feelings with characteristic vehemence in a curious journal which he had encouraged her to keep. It records her opinions about her affairs and her family, with a frankness, remarkable even in writing intended for no eye but her own. "Here is Mr. Johnson very ill," she writes on the 1st of February; . . . "What shall we do for him? If I lose *him*, I am more than undone—friend, father, guardian, confidant! God give me health and patience! What shall I do?" There is no reason to

doubt the sincerity of these sentiments, though they seem to represent a mood of excitement. They show that for ten months after Thrale's death Mrs. Thrale was keenly sensitive to the value of Johnson's friendship.

A change, however, was approaching. Towards the end of 1780 Mrs. Thrale had made the acquaintance of an Italian musician named Piozzi, a man of amiable and honourable character, making an independent income by his profession, but to the eyes of most people rather inoffensive than specially attractive. The friendship between Mrs. Thrale and Piozzi rapidly became closer, and by the end of 1781 she was on very intimate terms with the gentleman whom she calls "my Piozzi." He had been making a professional trip to the Continent during part of the period since her husband's death, and upon his return in November, Johnson congratulated her upon having two friends who loved her, in terms which suggest no existing feeling of jealousy. During 1782 the mutual affection of the lady and the musician became stronger, and in the autumn they had avowed it to each other, and were discussing the question of marriage.

No one who has had some experience of life will be inclined to condemn Mrs. Thrale for her passion. Rather the capacity for a passion not excited by an intrinsically unworthy object should increase our esteem for her. Her marriage with Thrale had been, as has been said, one of convenience; and, though she bore him many children and did her duty faithfully, she never loved him. Towards the end of his life he had made her jealous by very marked attentions to the pretty and sentimental Sophy Streatfield, which once caused a scene at his table; and during the last two years his mind had been weakened, and his conduct had caused her anxiety and discomfort.

It is not surprising that she should welcome the warm and simple devotion of her new lover, though she was of a ripe age and the mother of grown-up daughters.

It is, however, equally plain that an alliance with a foreign fiddler was certain to shock British respectability. It is the old story of the quarrel between Philistia and Bohemia. Nor was respectability without much to say for itself. Piozzi was a Catholic as well as a foreigner; to marry him was in all probability to break with daughters just growing into womanhood, whom it was obviously her first duty to protect. The marriage, therefore, might be regarded as not merely a revolt against conventional morality, but as leading to a desertion of country, religion, and family. Her children, her husband's friends, and her whole circle were certain to look upon the match with feelings of the strongest disapproval, and she admitted to herself that the objections were founded upon something more weighty than a fear of the world's censure.

Johnson, in particular, among whose virtues one cannot reckon a superiority to British prejudice, would inevitably consider the marriage as simply degrading. Foreseeing this, and wishing to avoid the pain of rejecting advice which she felt unable to accept, she refrained from retaining her "friend, father, and guardian" in the position of "confidant." Her situation in the summer of 1782 was therefore exceedingly trying. She was unhappy at home. Her children, she complains, did not love her; her servants "devoured" her; her friends censured her; and her expenses were excessive, whilst the loss of a lawsuit strained her resources. Johnson, sickly, suffering and descending into the gloom of approaching decay, was present like a charged thunder-cloud ready to burst at any moment, if she allowed him to approach the chief

subject of her thoughts. Though not in love with Mrs. Thrale, he had a very intelligible feeling of jealousy towards any one who threatened to distract her allegiance. Under such circumstances we might expect the state of things which Miss Burney described long afterwards (though with some confusion of dates). Mrs. Thrale, she says, was absent and agitated, restless in manner, and hurried in speech, forcing smiles, and averting her eyes from her friends; neglecting every one, including Johnson and excepting only Miss Burney herself, to whom the secret was confided, and the situation therefore explained. Gradually, according to Miss Burney, she became more petulant to Johnson than she was herself aware, gave palpable hints of being worried by his company, and finally excited his resentment and suspicion. In one or two utterances, though he doubtless felt the expedience of reserve, he intrusted his forebodings to Miss Burney, and declared that Streatham was lost to him for ever.

At last, in the end of August, the crisis came. Mrs. Thrale's lawsuit had gone against her. She thought it desirable to go abroad and save money. It had moreover been "long her dearest wish" to see Italy, with Piozzi for a guide. The one difficulty (as she says in her journal at the time), was that it seemed equally hard to part with Johnson or to take him with her till he had regained strength. At last, however she took courage to confide to him her plans for travel. To her extreme annoyance he fully approved of them. He advised her to go; anticipated her return in two or three years; and told her daughter that he should not accompany them, even if invited. No behaviour, it may be admitted, could be more provoking than this unforeseen reasonableness. To

nerve oneself to part with a friend, and to find the friend perfectly ready, and all your battery of argument thrown away is most vexatious. The poor man should have begged her to stay with him, or to take him with her; he should have made the scene which she professed to dread, but which would have been the best proof of her power. The only conclusion which could really have satisfied her—though she, in all probability, did not know it—would have been an outburst which would have justified a rupture, and allowed her to protest against his tyranny as she now proceeded to protest against his complacency.

Johnson wished to go to Italy two years later; and his present willingness to be left was probably caused by a growing sense of the dangers which threatened their friendship. Mrs. Thrale's anger appears in her journal. He had never really loved her, she declares; his affection for her had been interested, though even in her wrath she admits that he really loved her husband; he cared less for her conversation, which she had fancied necessary to his existence, than for her "roast beef and plumb pudden," which he now devours too "dirtily for endurance." She was fully resolved to go, and yet she could not bear that her going should fail to torture the friend whom for eighteen years she had loved and cherished so kindly.

No one has a right at once to insist upon the compliance of his friends, and to insist that it should be a painful compliance. Still Mrs. Thrale's petulant outburst was natural enough. It requires notice because her subsequent account of the rupture has given rise to attacks on Johnson's character. Her "Anecdotes," written in 1785, show that her real affection for Johnson was still coloured

by resentment for his conduct at this and a later period. They have an apologetic character which shows itself in a statement as to the origin of the quarrel, curiously different from the contemporary accounts in the diary. She says substantially, and the whole book is written so as to give probability to the assertion, that Johnson's bearishness and demands upon her indulgence had become intolerable, when he was no longer under restraint from her husband's presence. She therefore "took advantage" of her lost lawsuit and other troubles to leave London, and thus escape from his domestic tyranny. He no longer, as she adds, suffered from anything but "old age and general infirmity" (a tolerably wide exception!), and did not require her nursing. She therefore withdrew from the yoke to which she had contentedly submitted during her husband's life, but which was intolerable when her "coadjutor was no more."

Johnson's society was, we may easily believe, very trying to a widow in such a position; and it seems to be true that Thrale was better able than Mrs. Thrale to restrain his oddities, little as the lady shrunk at times from reasonable plain-speaking. But the later account involves something more than a bare suppression of the truth. The excuse about his health is, perhaps, the worst part of her case, because obviously insincere. Nobody could be more fully aware than Mrs. Thrale that Johnson's infirmities were rapidly gathering, and that another winter or two must in all probability be fatal to him. She knew, therefore, that he was never more in want of the care which, as she seems to imply, had saved him from the specific tendency to something like madness. She knew, in fact, that she was throwing him upon the care of his other friends, zealous and affectionate enough, it is true,

but yet unable to supply him with the domestic comforts of Streatham. She clearly felt that this was a real injury, inevitable it might be under the circumstances, but certainly not to be extenuated by the paltry evasion as to his improved health. So far from Johnson's health being now established, she had not dared to speak until his temporary recovery from a dangerous illness, which had provoked her at the time to the strongest expressions of anxious regret. She had (according to the diary) regarded a possible breaking of the yoke in the early part of 1782 as a terrible evil, which would "more than ruin her." Even when resolved to leave Streatham, her one great difficulty is the dread of parting with Johnson, and the pecuniary troubles are the solid and conclusive reason. In the later account the money question is the mere pretext; the desire to leave Johnson the true motive; and the long-cherished desire to see Italy with Piozzi is judiciously dropped out of notice altogether.

The truth is plain enough. Mrs. Thrale was torn by conflicting feelings. She still loved Johnson, and yet dreaded his certain disapproval of her strongest wishes. She respected him, but was resolved not to follow his advice. She wished to treat him with kindness and to be repaid with gratitude, and yet his presence and his affection were full of intolerable inconveniences. When an old friendship becomes a burden, the smaller infirmities of manner and temper to which we once submitted willingly, become intolerable. She had borne with Johnson's modes of eating and with his rough reproofs to herself and her friends during sixteen years of her married life; and for nearly a year of her widowhood she still clung to him as the wisest and kindest of monitors. His manners had undergone no spasmodic change. They became intolerable

when, for other reasons, she resented his possible interference, and wanted a very different guardian and confidant; and, therefore, she wished to part, and yet wished that the initiative should come from him.

The decision to leave Streatham was taken. Johnson parted with deep regret from the house; he read a chapter of the Testament in the library; he took leave of the church with a kiss; he composed a prayer commending the family to the protection of Heaven; and he did not forget to note in his journal the details of the last dinner of which he partook. This quaint observation may have been due to some valetudinary motive, or, more probably, to some odd freak of association. Once, when eating an omelette, he was deeply affected because it recalled his old friend Nugent. "Ah, my dear friend," he said "in an agony," "I shall never eat omelette with thee again!" And in the present case there is an obscure reference to some funeral connected in his mind with a meal. The unlucky entry has caused some ridicule, but need hardly convince us that his love of the family in which for so many years he had been an honoured and honour-giving inmate was, as Miss Seward amiably suggests, in great measure "kitchen-love."

No immediate rupture followed the abandonment of the Streatham establishment. Johnson spent some weeks at Brighton with Mrs. Thrale, during which a crisis was taking place, without his knowledge, in her relations to Piozzi. After vehement altercations with her daughters, whom she criticizes with great bitterness for their utter want of heart, she resolved to break with Piozzi for at least a time. Her plan was to go to Bath, and there to retrench her expenses, in the hopes of being able to recall her lover at some future period. Meanwhile he left her

and returned to Italy. After another winter in London, during which Johnson was still a frequent inmate of her house, she went to Bath with her daughters in April, 1783. A melancholy period followed for both the friends. Mrs. Thrale lost a younger daughter, and Johnson had a paralytic stroke in June. Death was sending preliminary warnings. A correspondence was kept up, which implies that the old terms were not ostensibly broken. Mrs. Thrale speaks tartly more than once; and Johnson's letters go into medical details with his customary plainness of speech, and he occasionally indulges in laments over the supposed change in her feelings. The gloom is thickening, and the old playful gallantry has died out. The old man evidently felt himself deserted, and suffered from the breaking-up of the asylum he had loved so well. The final catastrophe came in 1784, less than six months before Johnson's death.

After much suffering in mind and body, Mrs. Thrale had at last induced her daughters to consent to her marriage with Piozzi. She sent for him at once, and they were married in June, 1784. A painful correspondence followed. Mrs. Thrale announced her marriage in a friendly letter to Johnson, excusing her previous silence on the ground that discussion could only have caused them pain. The revelation, though Johnson could not have been quite unprepared, produced one of his bursts of fury. "Madam, if I interpret your letter rightly," wrote the old man, "you are ignominiously married. If it is yet undone, let us once more talk together. If you have abandoned your children and your religion, God forgive your wickedness! If you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly do no further mischief! If the last act is yet to do, I, who have loved you, esteemed

you, revered you, and served you—I, who long thought you the first of womankind—entreat that before your fate is irrevocable, I may once more see you! I was, I once was, madam, most truly yours, Sam. Johnson."

Mrs. Thrale replied with spirit and dignity to this cry of blind indignation, speaking of her husband with becoming pride, and resenting the unfortunate phrase about her loss of "fame." She ended by declining further intercourse till Johnson could change his opinion of Piozzi. Johnson admitted in his reply that he had no right to resent her conduct; expressed his gratitude for the kindness which had "soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched," and implored her ("superfluously," as she says) to induce Piozzi to settle in England. He then took leave of her with an expression of sad forebodings. Mrs. Thrale, now Mrs. Piozzi, says that she replied affectionately; but the letter is missing. The friendship was broken off, and during the brief remainder of Johnson's life, the Piozzis were absent from England.

Of her there is little more to be said. After passing some time in Italy, where she became a light of that wretched little Della Cruscan society of which some faint memory is preserved by Gifford's ridicule, now pretty nearly forgotten with its objects, she returned with her husband to England. Her anecdotes of Johnson, published soon after his death, had a success which, in spite of much ridicule, encouraged her to some further literary efforts of a sprightly but ephemeral kind. She lived happily with Piozzi, and never had cause to regret her marriage. She was reconciled to her daughters sufficiently to renew a friendly intercourse; but the elder ones set up a separate establishment. Piozzi died not long afterwards. She was still a vivacious old lady, who celebrated

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her 80th birthday by a ball, and is supposed at that ripe age to have made an offer of marriage to a young actor. She died in May, 1821, leaving all that she could dispose of to a nephew of Piozzi's, who had been naturalised in England.

Meanwhile Johnson was rapidly approaching the grave. His old inmates, Levett and Miss Williams, had gone before him; Goldsmith and Garrick and Beauclerk had become memories of the past; and the gloom gathered thickly around him. The old man clung to life with pathetic earnestness. Though life had been often melancholy, he never affected to conceal the horror with which he regarded death. He frequently declared that death must be dreadful to every reasonable man. "Death, my dear, is very dreadful," he says simply in a letter to Lucy Porter in the last year of his life. Still later he shocked a pious friend by admitting that the fear oppressed him. Dr. Adams tried the ordinary consolation of the divine goodness, and went so far as to suggest that hell might not imply much positive suffering. Johnson's religious views were of a different colour. "I am afraid," he said, "I may be one of those who shall be damned." "What do you mean by damned?" asked Adams. Johnson replied passionately and loudly, "Sent to hell, sir, and punished everlastingly." Remonstrances only deepened his melancholy, and he silenced his friends by exclaiming in gloomy agitation, "I'll have no more on't!" Often in these last years he was heard muttering to himself the passionate complaint of Claudio, "Ah, but to die and go we know not whither!" At other times he was speaking of some lost friend, and saying, "Poor man—and then he died!" The peculiar horror of death, which seems to indicate a tinge of insanity, was combined with utter

fearlessness of pain. He called to the surgeons to cut deeper when performing a painful operation, and shortly before his death inflicted such wounds upon himself in hopes of obtaining relief as, very erroneously, to suggest the idea of suicide. Whilst his strength remained, he endeavoured to disperse melancholy by some of the old methods. In the winter of 1783-4 he got together the few surviving members of the old Ivy Lane Club, which had flourished when he was composing the *Dictionary*; but the old place of meeting had vanished, most of the original members were dead, and the gathering can have been but melancholy. He started another club at the Essex Head, whose members were to meet twice a week, with the modest fine of threepence for non-attendance. It appears to have included a rather "strange mixture" of people, and thereby to have given some scandal to Sir John Hawkins and even to Reynolds. They thought that his craving for society, increased by his loss of Streatham, was leading him to undignified concessions.

Amongst the members of the club, however, were such men as Horsley and Windham. Windham seems to have attracted more personal regard than most politicians, by a generous warmth of enthusiasm not too common in the class. In politics he was an ardent disciple of Burke's, whom he afterwards followed in his separation from the new Whigs. But, though adhering to the principles which Johnson detested, he knew, like his preceptor, how to win Johnson's warmest regard. He was the most eminent of the younger generation who now looked up to Johnson as a venerable relic from the past. Another was young Burke, that very priggish and silly young man as he seems to have been, whose loss, none the less, broke the tender heart of his father. Friendships, now more in-

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teresting, were those with two of the most distinguished authoresses of the day. One of them was Hannah More, who was about this time coming to the conclusion that the talents which had gained her distinction in the literary and even in the dramatic world, should be consecrated to less secular employment. Her vivacity during the earlier years of their acquaintance exposed her to an occasional rebuff. "She does not gain upon me, sir; I think her empty-headed," was one of his remarks; and it was to her that he said, according to Mrs. Thrale, though Boswell reports a softened version of the remark, that she should "consider what her flattery was worth, before she choked him with it." More frequently, he seems to have repaid it in kind. "There was no name in poetry," he said, "which might not be glad to own her poem"—the *Bas Bleu*. Certainly Johnson did not stick at trifles in intercourse with his female friends. He was delighted, shortly before his death, to "gallant it about" with her at Oxford, and in serious moments showed a respectful regard for her merits. Hannah More, who thus sat at the feet of Johnson, encouraged the juvenile ambition of Macaulay, and did not die till the historian had grown into manhood and fame. The other friendship noticed was with Fanny Burney, who also lived to our own time. Johnson's affection for this daughter of his friend seems to have been amongst the tenderest of his old age. When she was first introduced to him at the Thrales, she was overpowered and indeed had her head a little turned by flattery of the most agreeable kind that an author can receive. The "great literary Leviathan" showed himself to have the recently published *Evelina* at his fingers' ends. He quoted, and almost acted passages. "La! Polly!" he exclaimed in a

pert feminine accent, "only think! Miss has danced with a lord!" How many modern readers can assign its place to that quotation, or answer the question which poor Boswell asked in despair and amidst general ridicule for his ignorance, "What is a Drangon?" There is something pleasant in the enthusiasm with which men like Johnson and Burke welcomed the literary achievements of the young lady, whose first novel seem to have made a sensation almost as lively as that produced by Miss Brontë, and far superior to anything that fell to the lot of Miss Austen. Johnson seems also to have regarded her with personal affection. He had a tender interview with her shortly before his death; he begged her with solemn energy to remember him in her prayers; he apologized pathetically for being unable to see her, as his weakness increased; and sent her tender messages from his deathbed.

As the end drew near, Johnson accepted the inevitable like a man. After spending most of the latter months of 1784 in the country with the friends who, after the loss of the Thrales, could give him most domestic comfort, he came back to London to die. He made his will, and settled a few matters of business, and was pleased to be told that he would be buried in Westminster Abbey. He uttered a few words of solemn advice to those who came near him, and took affecting leave of his friends. Langton, so warmly loved, was in close attendance. Johnson said to him tenderly, *Te teneam moriens deficiente manu*. Windham broke from political occupations to sit by the dying man; once Langton found Burke sitting by his bedside with three or four friends. "I am afraid," said Burke, "that so many of us must be oppressive to you." "No, sir, it is not so," replied Johnson, "and I must be

in a wretched state indeed when your company would not be a delight to me." "My dear sir," said Burke, with a breaking voice, "you have always been too good to me;" and parted from his old friend for the last time. Of Reynolds, he begged three things: to forgive a debt of thirty pounds, to read the Bible, and never to paint on Sundays. A few flashes of the old humour broke through. He said of a man who sat up with him: "Sir, the fellow's an idiot; he's as awkward as a turnspit when first put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse," His last recorded words were to a young lady who had begged for his blessing: "God bless you, my dear." The same day, December 13th, 1784, he gradually sank and died peacefully. He was laid in the Abbey by the side of Goldsmith, and the playful prediction has been amply fulfilled:—

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.

The names of many greater writers are inscribed upon the walls of Westminster Abbey; but scarcely any one lies there whose heart was more acutely responsive during life to the deepest and tenderest of human emotions. In visiting that strange gathering of departed heroes and statesmen and philanthropists and poets, there are many whose words and deeds have a far greater influence upon our imaginations; but there are very few whom, when all has been said, we can love so heartily as Samuel Johnson.

CHAPTER VI.

JOHNSON'S WRITINGS.

It remains to speak of Johnson's position in literature. For reasons sufficiently obvious, few men whose lives have been devoted to letters for an equal period, have left behind them such scanty and inadequate remains. Johnson, as we have seen, worked only under the pressure of circumstances; a very small proportion of his latter life was devoted to literary employment. The working hours of his earlier years were spent for the most part in productions which can hardly be called literary. Seven years were devoted to the *Dictionary*, which, whatever its merits, could be a book only in the material sense of the word, and was of course destined to be soon superseded. Much of his hack-work has doubtless passed into oblivion, and though the ordinary relic-worship has gathered together fragments enough to fill twelve decent octavo volumes (to which may be added the two volumes of parliamentary reports), the part which can be called alive may be compressed into very moderate compass. Johnson may be considered as a poet, an essayist, a pamphleteer, a traveller, a critic, and a biographer. Among his poems, the two imitations of Juvenal, especially, the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, and a minor fragment or two, probably deserve more respect than would be conceded

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to them by adherents of modern schools. His most ambitious work, *Irene*, can be read by men in whom a sense of duty has been abnormally developed. Among the two hundred and odd essays of the *Rambler*, there is a fair proportion which will deserve, but will hardly obtain, respectful attention. *Rasselas*, one of the philosophical tales popular in the last century, gives the essence of much of the *Rambler* in a different form, and to these may be added the essay upon Soame Jenyns, which deals with the same absorbing question of human happiness. The political pamphlets, and the *Journey to the Hebrides*, have a certain historical interest; but are otherwise readable only in particular passages. Much of his criticism is pretty nearly obsolete; but the child of his old age—the *Lives of the Poets*—a book in which criticism and biography are combined, is an admirable performance in spite of serious defects. It is the work that best reflects his mind, and intelligent readers who have once made its acquaintance, will be apt to turn it into a familiar companion.

If it is easy to assign the causes which limited the quantity of Johnson's work, it is more curious to inquire what was the quality which once gained for it so much authority, and which now seems to have so far lost its savour. The peculiar style which is associated with Johnson's name must count for something in both processes. The mannerism is strongly marked, and of course offensive; for by "mannerism," as I understand the word, is meant the repetition of certain forms of language in obedience to blind habit and without reference to their propriety in the particular case. Johnson's sentences seem to be contorted, as his gigantic limbs need to twitch, by a kind of mechanical spasmodic

action. The most obvious peculiarity is the tendency which he noticed himself, to "use too big words and too many of them." He had to explain to Miss Reynolds that the Shakesperian line,—

You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth,

had been applied to him because he used "big words, which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce them." It was not, however, the mere bigness of the words that distinguished his style, but a peculiar love of putting the abstract for the concrete, of using awkward inversions, and of balancing his sentences in a monotonous rhythm, which gives the appearance, as it sometimes corresponds to the reality, of elaborate logical discrimination. With all its faults the style has the merits of masculine directness. The inversions are not such as to complicate the construction. As Boswell remarks, he never uses a parenthesis; and his style, though ponderous and wearisome, is as transparent as the smarter snipsnap of Macaulay.

This singular mannerism appears in his earliest writings; it is most marked at the time of the *Rambler*; whilst in the *Lives of the Poets*, although I think that the trick of inversion has become commoner, the other peculiarities have been so far softened as (in my judgment, at least), to be inoffensive. It is perhaps needless to give examples of a tendency which marks almost every page of his writing. A passage or two from the *Rambler* may illustrate the quality of the style, and the oddity of the effect produced, when it is applied to topics of a trivial kind. The author of the *Rambler* is supposed to receive a remonstrance upon his excessive gravity from the lively Flirtilla, who wishes him to write in defence of

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masquerades. Conscious of his own incapacity, he applies to a man of "high reputation in gay life;" who, on the fifth perusal of Flirtilla's letter breaks into a rapture, and declares that he is ready to devote himself to her service. Here is part of the apostrophe put into the mouth of this brilliant rake. "Behold, Flirtilla, at thy feet a man grown gray in the study of those noble arts by which right and wrong may be confounded; by which reason may be blinded, when we have a mind to escape from her inspection, and caprice and appetite instated in uncontrolled command and boundless dominion! Such a casuist may surely engage with certainty of success in vindication of an entertainment which in an instant gives confidence to the timorous and kindles ardour in the cold, an entertainment where the vigilance of jealousy has so often been clouded, and the virgin is set free from the necessity of languishing in silence; where all the outworks of chastity are at once demolished; where the heart is laid open without a blush; where bashfulness may survive virtue, and no wish is crushed under the frown of modesty."

Here is another passage, in which Johnson is speaking upon a topic more within his proper province; and which contains sound sense under its weight of words. A man, he says, who reads a printed book, is often contented to be pleased without critical examination. "But," he adds, "if the same man be called to consider the merit of a production yet unpublished, he brings an imagination heated with objections to passages which he has never yet heard; he invokes all the powers of criticism, and stores his memory with Taste and Grace, Purity and Delicacy, Manners and Unities, sounds which having been once uttered by those that understood

them, have been since re-echoed without meaning, and kept up to the disturbance of the world by constant repercussion from one coxcomb to another. He considers himself as obliged to show by some proof of his abilities, that he is not consulted to no purpose, and therefore watches every opening for objection, and looks round for every opportunity to propose some specious alteration. Such opportunities a very small degree of sagacity will enable him to find, for in every work of imagination, the disposition of parts, the insertion of incidents, and use of decorations may be varied in a thousand ways with equal propriety; and, as in things nearly equal that will always seem best to every man which he himself produces, the critic, whose business is only to propose without the care of execution, can never want the satisfaction of believing that he has suggested very important improvements, nor the power of enforcing his advice by arguments, which, as they appear convincing to himself, either his kindness or his vanity will press obstinately and importunately, without suspicion that he may possibly judge too hastily in favour of his own advice or inquiry whether the advantage of the new scheme be proportionate to the labour." We may still notice a "repercussion" of words from one coxcomb to another; though somehow the words have been changed or translated.

Johnson's style is characteristic of the individual and of the epoch. The preceding generation had exhibited the final triumph of common sense over the pedantry of a decaying scholasticism. The movements represented by Locke's philosophy, by the rationalizing school in theology, and by the so-called classicism of Pope and his followers, are different phases of the same impulse. The quality

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valued above all others in philosophy, literature, and art was clear, bright, common sense. To expel the mystery which had served as a cloak for charlatans was the great aim of the time, and the method was to appeal from the professors of exploded technicalities to the judgment of cultivated men of the world. Berkeley places his Utopia in happy climes, —

Where nature guides, and virtue rules,
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
The pedantry of courts and schools.

Simplicity, clearness, directness are, therefore, the great virtues of thought and style. Berkeley, Addison, Pope, and Swift are the great models of such excellence in various departments of literature.

In the succeeding generation we become aware of a certain leaven of dissatisfaction with the æsthetic and intellectual code thus inherited. The supremacy of common sense, the superlative importance of clearness, is still fully acknowledged, but there is a growing undertone of dissent in form and substance. Attempts are made to restore philosophical conceptions assailed by Locke and his followers; the rationalism of the deistic or semi-deistic writers is declared to be superficial; their optimistic theories disregard the dark side of nature, and provide no sufficient utterance for the sadness caused by the contemplation of human suffering; and the polished monotony of Pope's verses begins to pall upon those who shall tread in his steps. Some daring sceptics are even inquiring whether he is a poet at all. And simultaneously, though Addison is still a kind of sacred model, the best prose writers are beginning to aim at a more complex structure of sentence, fitted for the expression of a wider range of thought and emotion.

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Johnson, though no conscious revolutionist, shares this growing discontent. The *Spectator* is written in the language of the drawing-room and the coffee-house. Nothing is ever said which might not pass in conversation between a couple of "wits," with, at most, some graceful indulgence in passing moods of solemn or tender sentiment. Johnson, though devoted to society in his own way, was anything but a producer of small talk. Society meant to him an escape from the gloom which beset him whenever he was abandoned to his thoughts. Neither his education nor the manners acquired in Grub Street had qualified him to be an observer of those lighter foibles which were touched by Addison with so dexterous a hand. When he ventures upon such topics he flounders dreadfully, and rather reminds us of an artist who should attempt to paint miniatures with a mop. No man, indeed, took more of interest in what is called the science of human nature; and, when roused by the stimulus of argument, he could talk, as has been shown, with almost unrivalled vigour and point. But his favourite topics are the deeper springs of character, rather than superficial peculiarities; and his vigorous sayings are concentrated essence of strong sense and deep feeling, not dainty epigrams or graceful embodiments of delicate observation. Johnson was not, like some contemporary antiquarians, a systematic student of the English literature of the preceding centuries, but he had a strong affection for some of its chief masterpieces. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was, he declared, the only book which ever got him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished. Sir Thomas Browne was another congenial writer, who is supposed to have had some influence upon his style. He never seems to have directly imitated any one, though some nonsense has been talked about his

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"forming a style;" but it is probable that he felt a closer affinity to those old scholars, with their elaborate and ornate language and their deep and solemn tone of sentiment, than to the brilliant but comparatively superficial writers of Queen Anne's time. He was, one may say, a scholar of the old type, forced by circumstances upon the world, but always retaining a sympathy for the scholar's life and temper. Accordingly, his style acquired something of the old elaboration, though the attempt to conform to the canons of a later age renders the structure disagreeably monotonous. His tendency to pomposity is not redeemed by the *naïveté* and spontaneity of his masters.

The inferiority of Johnson's written to his spoken utterances is indicative of his divided life. There are moments at which his writing takes the terse, vigorous tone of his talk. In his letters, such as those to Chesterfield and Macpherson and in occasional passages of his pamphlets, we see that he could be pithy enough when he chose to descend from his Latinized abstractions to good concrete English; but that is only when he becomes excited. His face when in repose, we are told, appeared to be almost imbecile; he was constantly sunk in reveries, from which he was only roused by a challenge to conversation. In his writings, for the most part, we seem to be listening to the reverie rather than the talk; we are over-hearing a soliloquy in his study, not a vigorous discussion over the twentieth cup of tea; he is not fairly put upon his mettle, and is content to expound without enforcing. We seem to see a man, heavy-eyed, ponderous in his gestures, like some huge mechanism which grinds out a ponderous tissue of verbiage as heavy as it is certainly solid.

The substance corresponds to the style. Johnson has

something in common with the fashionable pessimism of modern times. No sentimentalist of to-day could be more convinced that life is in the main miserable. It was his favourite theory, according to Mrs. Thrale, that all human action was prompted by the "vacuity of life." Men act solely in the hope of escaping from themselves. Evil, as a follower of Schopenhauer would assert, is the positive, and good merely the negative of evil. All desire is at bottom an attempt to escape from pain. The doctrine neither resulted from, nor generated, a philosophical theory in Johnson's case, and was in the main a generalization of his own experience. Not the less, the aim of most of his writing is to express this sentiment in one form or other. He differs, indeed, from most modern sentimentalists, in having the most hearty contempt for useless whining. If he dwells upon human misery, it is because he feels that it is as futile to join with the optimist in ignoring, as with the pessimist in howling over the evil. We are in a sad world, full of pain, but we have to make the best of it. Stubborn patience and hard work are the sole remedies, or rather the sole means of temporary escape. Much of the *Rambler* is occupied with variations upon this theme, and expresses the kind of dogged resolution with which he would have us plod through this weary world. Take for example this passage:—"The controversy about the reality of external evils is now at an end. That life has many miseries, and that those miseries are sometimes at least equal to all the powers of fortitude is now universally confessed; and, therefore, it is useful to consider not only how we may escape them, but by what means those which either the accidents of affairs or the infirmities of nature must bring upon us may be mitigated and

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lightened, and how we may make those hours less wretched which the condition of our present existence will not allow to be very happy.

"The cure for the greatest part of human miseries is not radical, but palliative. Infelicity is involved in corporeal nature, and interwoven with our being; all attempts, therefore, to decline it wholly are useless and vain; the armies of pain send their arrows against us on every side, the choice is only between those which are more or less sharp, or tinged with poison of greater or less malignity; and the strongest armour which reason can supply will only blunt their points, but cannot repel them.

"The great remedy which Heaven has put in our hands is patience, by which, though we cannot lessen the torments of the body, we can in a great measure preserve the peace of the mind, and shall suffer only the natural and genuine force of an evil, without heightening its acrimony or prolonging its effects."

It is hardly desirable for a moralist to aim at originality in his precepts. We must be content if he enforces old truths in such a manner as to convince us of the depth and sincerity of his feeling. Johnson, it must be confessed, rather abuses the moralist's privilege of being commonplace. He descants not unfrequently upon propositions so trite that even the most earnest enforcement can give them little interest. With all drawbacks, however, the moralizing is the best part of the *Rambler*. Many of the papers follow the precedent set by Addison in the *Spectator*, but without Addison's felicity. Like Addison, he indulges in allegory, which, in his hands, becomes unendurably frigid and clumsy; he tries light social satire, and is fain to confess that we can spy a beard under the muffler of his feminine characters; he

treats us to criticism which, like Addison's, goes upon exploded principles, but unlike Addison's, is apt to be almost wilfully outrageous. His odd remarks upon Milton's versification are the worst example of this weakness. The result is what one might expect from the attempt of a writer without an ear to sit in judgment upon the greatest master of harmony in the language.

These defects have consigned the *Rambler* to the dustiest shelves of libraries, and account for the wonder expressed by such a critic as M. Taine at the English love of Johnson. Certainly if that love were nourished, as he seems to fancy, by assiduous study of the *Rambler*, it would be a curious phenomenon. And yet with all its faults, the reader who can plod through its pages will at least feel respect for the author. It is not unworthy of the man whose great lesson is "clear your mind of cant;"¹ who felt most deeply the misery of the world, but from the bottom of his heart despised querulous and sentimental complaints on one side, and optimist glasses upon the other. To him, as to some others of his temperament, the affectation of looking at the bright side of things seems to have presented itself as the bitterest of mockeries; and nothing would tempt him to let fine words pass themselves off for genuine sense. Here are some remarks upon the vanity in which some authors seek for consolation, which may illustrate this

¹ Of this well-known sentiment it may be said, as of some other familiar quotations, that its direct meaning has been slightly modified in use. The emphasis is changed. Johnson's words were "Clear your *mind* of cant. You may talk as other people do; you may say to a man, sir, I am your humble servant; you are *not* his most humble servant. . . . You may *talk* in this manner; it is a mode of talking in society; but don't *think* foolishly."

love of realities and conclude our quotations from the *Rambler*.

"By such acts of voluntary delusion does every man endeavour to conceal his own unimportance from himself. It is long before we are convinced of the small proportion which every individual bears to the collective body of mankind; or learn how few can be interested in the fortune of any single man; how little vacancy is left in the world for any new object of attention; to how small extent the brightest blaze of merit can be spread amidst the mists of business and of folly; and how soon it is clouded by the intervention of other novelties. Not only the writer of books, but the commander of armies, and the deliverer of nations, will easily outlive all noisy and popular reputation: he may be celebrated for a time by the public voice, but his actions and his name will soon be considered as remote and unaffecting, and be rarely mentioned but by those whose alliance gives them some vanity to gratify by frequent commemoration. It seems not to be sufficiently considered how little renown can be admitted in the world. Mankind are kept perpetually busy by their fears or desires, and have not more leisure from their own affairs than to acquaint themselves with the accidents of the current day. Engaged in contriving some refuge from calamity, or in shortening their way to some new possession, they seldom suffer their thoughts to wander to the past or future; none but a few solitary students have leisure to inquire into the claims of ancient heroes or sages; and names which hoped to range over kingdoms and continents shrink at last into cloisters and colleges. Nor is it certain that even of these dark and narrow habitations, these last retreats of fame, the possession will be long kept. Of men devoted

to literature very few extend their views beyond some particular science, and the greater part seldom inquire, even in their own profession, for any authors but those whom the present mode of study happens to force upon their notice; they desire not to fill their minds with unfashionable knowledge, but contentedly resign to oblivion those books which they now find censured or neglected."

The most remarkable of Johnson's utterances upon his favourite topic of the Vanity of Human Wishes is the story of *Rasselas*. The plan of the book is simple, and recalls certain parts of Voltaire's simultaneous but incomparably more brilliant attack upon Optimism in *Candide*. There is supposed to be a happy valley in Abyssinia where the royal princes are confined in total seclusion, but with ample supplies for every conceivable want. *Rasselas*, who has been thus educated, becomes curious as to the outside world, and at last makes his escape with his sister, her attendant, and the ancient sage and poet, *Imlac*. Under *Imlac*'s guidance they survey life and manners in various stations; they make the acquaintance of philosophers, statesmen, men of the world, and recluses; they discuss the results of their experience pretty much in the style of the *Rambler*; they agree to pronounce the sentence "Vanity of Vanities!" and finally, in a "conclusion where nothing is concluded," they resolve to return to the happy valley. The book is little more than a set of essays upon life, with just story enough to hold it together. It is wanting in those brilliant flashes of epigram, which illustrate Voltaire's pages so as to blind some readers to its real force of sentiment, and yet it leaves a peculiar and powerful impression upon the reader.

The general tone may be collected from a few passages.

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Here is a fragment, the conclusion of which is perhaps the most familiar of quotations from Johnson's writings. Imlac in narrating his life describes his attempts to become a poet.

"The business of a poet," said Imlac, "is to examine not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features as recall the original to every mind; and must neglect the minute discriminations which one may have remarked, and another have neglected for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness."

"But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and know the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions, and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondency of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same; he must therefore content himself with the slow progress of his name; condemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners

of future generations, as a being superior to time and place.

"His labours are not yet at an end; he must know many languages and many sciences; and that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must by incessant practice familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony."

Imlac now felt the enthusiastic fit and was proceeding to aggrandize his profession, when the prince cried out, "Enough, thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet."

Indeed, Johnson's conception of poetry is not the one which is now fashionable, and which would rather seem to imply that philosophical power and moral sensibility are so far disqualifications to the true poet.

Here, again, is a view of the superfine system of moral philosophy. A meeting of learned men is discussing the ever-recurring problem of happiness, and one of them speaks as follows:—

"The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire; he will receive and reject with equability of temper, and act or suffer as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions or intricate ratiocinations. Let him learn to be wise by easier means: let him observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove; let him consider the life of

animals whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide and are happy.

"Let us, therefore, at length cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim, that deviation from nature is deviation from happiness."

The prince modestly inquires what is the precise meaning of the advice just given.

"When I find young men so humble and so docile," said the philosopher, "I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects, to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things.

"The prince soon found that this was one of the sages, whom he should understand less as he heard him longer."

Here, finally, is a characteristic reflection upon the right mode of meeting sorrow.

"The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity," said Imlac, "is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled; yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do



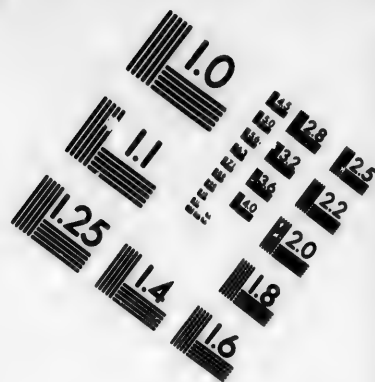
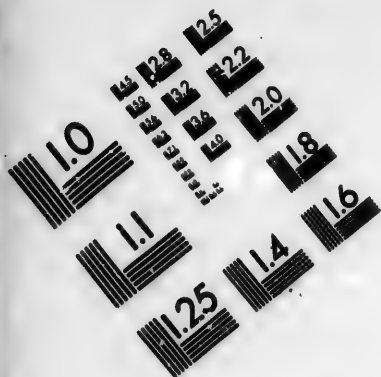
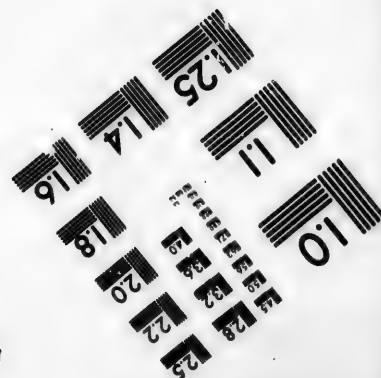
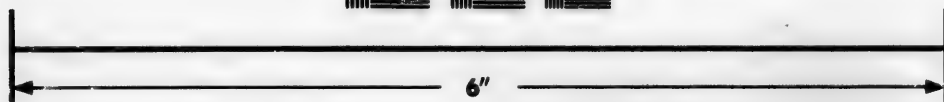
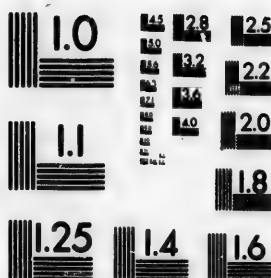


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as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either, but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation.

"Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye, and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion; commit yourself again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet in your way some other favourite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation."

In one respect *Rasselas* is curiously contrasted with *Candide*. Voltaire's story is aimed at the doctrine of theological optimism, and, whether that doctrine be well or ill understood, has therefore an openly sceptical tendency. Johnson, to whom nothing could be more abhorrent than an alliance with any assailant of orthodoxy, draws no inference from his pessimism. He is content to state the fact of human misery without perplexing himself with the resulting problem as to the final cause of human existence. If the question had been explicitly brought before him, he would, doubtless, have replied that the mystery was insoluble. To answer either in the sceptical or the optimistic sense was equally presumptuous. Johnson's religious beliefs in fact were not such as to suggest that kind of comfort which is to be obtained by explaining away the existence of evil. If he, too, would have said that in some sense all must be for the best in a world ruled by a perfect Creator, the sense must be one which

would allow of the eternal misery of indefinite multitudes of his creatures.

But, in truth, it was characteristic of Johnson to turn away his mind from such topics. He was interested in ethical speculations, but on the practical side, in the application to life, not in the philosophy on which it might be grounded. In that direction he could see nothing but a "milking of the bull"—a fruitless or rather a pernicious waste of intellect. An intense conviction of the supreme importance of a moral guidance in this difficult world, made him abhor any rash inquiries by which the basis of existing authority might be endangered.

This sentiment is involved in many of those prejudices which have been so much, and in some sense justifiably ridiculed. Man has been wretched and foolish since the race began, and will be till it ends; one chorus of lamentation has ever been rising, in countless dialects but with a single meaning; the plausible schemes of philosophers give no solution to the everlasting riddle; the nostrums of politicians touch only the surface of the deeply-rooted evil; it is folly to be querulous, and as silly to fancy that men are growing worse, as that they are much better than they used to be. The evils under which we suffer are not skin-deep, to be eradicated by changing the old physicians for new quacks. What is to be done under such conditions, but to hold fast as vigorously as we can to the rules of life and faith which have served our ancestors, and which, whatever their justifications, are at least the only consolation, because they supply the only guidance through this labyrinth of troubles? Macaulay has ridiculed Johnson for what he takes to be the ludicrous inconsistency of his intense political prejudice, combined with his assertion of the indifference of all forms of

government. "If," says Macaulay, 'the difference between two forms of government be not worth half a guinea, it is not easy to see how Whiggism can be viler than Toryism, or the Crown can have too little power.' The answer is surely obvious. Whiggism is vile, according to the doctor's phrase, because Whiggism is a "negation of all principle;" it is in his view, not so much the preference of one form to another, as an attack upon the vital condition of all government. He called Burke a "bottomless Whig" in this sense, implying that Whiggism meant anarchy; and in the next generation a good many people were led, rightly or wrongly, to agree with him by the experience of the French revolution.

This dogged conservatism has both its value and its grotesque side. When Johnson came to write political pamphlets in his later years, and to deal with subjects little familiar to his mind, the results were grotesque enough. Loving authority, and holding one authority to be as good as another, he defended with uncompromising zeal the most preposterous and tyrannical measures. The pamphlets against the Wilkite agitators and the American rebels are little more than a huge "rhinoceros" snort of contempt against all who are fools enough or wicked enough to promote war and disturbance in order to change one form of authority for another. Here is a characteristic passage, giving his view of the value of such demonstrators:—

"The progress of a petition is well known. An ejected placeman goes down to his county or his borough, tells his friends of his inability to serve them as his constituents, of the corruption of his government. His friends readily understand that he who can get nothing, will have nothing to give. They agree to proclaim a meeting

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Meat and drink are plentifully provided, a crowd is easily brought together, and those who think that they know the reason of the meeting undertake to tell those who know it not. Ale and clamour unite their powers; the crowd, condensed and heated, begins to ferment with the leaven of sedition. All see a thousand evils, though they cannot show them, and grow impatient for a remedy, though they know not what.

"A speech is then made by the Cicero of the day; he says much and suppresses more, and credit is equally given to what he tells and what he conceals. The petition is heard and universally approved. Those who are sober enough to write, add their names, and the rest would sign it if they could.

"Every man goes home and tells his neighbour of the glories of the day; how he was consulted, and what he advised; how he was invited into the great room, where his lordship called him by his name; how he was caressed by Sir Francis, Sir Joseph, and Sir George; how he ate turtle and venison, and drank unanimity to the three brothers.

"The poor loiterer, whose shop had confined him or whose wife had locked him up, hears the tale of luxury with envy, and at last inquires what was their petition. Of the petition nothing is remembered by the narrator, but that it spoke much of fears and apprehensions and something very alarming, but that he is sure it is against the government.

"The other is convinced that it must be right, and wishes he had been there, for he loves wine and venison, and resolves as long as he lives to be against the government.

"The petition is then handed from town to town, and from house to house; and wherever it comes, the inha-

bitants flock together that they may see that which must be sent to the king. Names are easily collected. One man signs because he hates the papists; another because he has vowed destruction to the turnpikes; one because it will vex the parson; another because he owes his landlord nothing; one because he is rich; another because he is poor; one to show that he is not afraid; and another to show that he can write."

The only writing in which we see a distinct reflection of Johnson's talk is the *Lives of the Poets*. The excellence of that book is of the same kind as the excellence of his conversation. Johnson wrote it under pressure, and it has suffered from his characteristic indolence. Modern authors would fill as many pages as Johnson has filled lines, with the biographies of some of his heroes. By industriously sweeping together all the rubbish which is in any way connected with the great man, by elaborately discussing the possible significance of infinitesimal bits of evidence, and by disquisition upon general principles or the whole mass of contemporary literature, it is easy to swell volumes to any desired extent. The result is sometimes highly interesting and valuable, as it is sometimes a new contribution to the dust-heaps; but in any case the design is something quite different from Johnson's. He has left much to be supplied and corrected by later scholars. His aim is simply to give a vigorous summary of the main facts of his heroes' lives, a pithy analysis of their character, and a short criticism of their productions. The strong sense which is everywhere displayed, the massive style, which is yet easier and less cumbrous than in his earlier work, and the uprightness and independence of the judgments, make the book agreeable even where we are most inclined to dissent from its conclusions.

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The criticism is that of a school which has died out under the great revolution of modern taste. The booksellers decided that English poetry began for their purposes with Cowley, and Johnson has, therefore, nothing to say about some of the greatest names in our literature. The loss is little to be regretted, since the biographical part of earlier memoirs must have been scanty, and the criticism inappreciative. Johnson, it may be said, like most of his contemporaries, considered poetry almost exclusively from the didactic and logical point of view. He always inquires what is the moral of a work of art. If he does not precisely ask "what it proves," he pays excessive attention to the logical solidity and coherence of its sentiments. He condemns not only insincerity and affectation of feeling, but all such poetic imagery as does not correspond to the actual prosaic belief of the writer. For the purely musical effects of poetry he has little or no feeling, and allows little deviation from the alternate long and short syllables neatly bound in Pope's couplets.

To many readers this would imply that Johnson omits precisely the poetic element in poetry. I must be here content to say that in my opinion it implies rather a limitation than a fundamental error. Johnson errs in supposing that his logical tests are at all adequate; but it is, I think, a still greater error to assume that poetry has no connexion, because it has not this kind of connexion, with philosophy. His criticism has always a meaning, and in the case of works belonging to his own school a very sound meaning. When he is speaking of other poetry, we can only reply that his remarks may be true, but that they are not to the purpose.

The remarks on the poetry of Dryden, Addison, and Pope are generally excellent, and always give the genuine

expression of an independent judgment. Whoever thinks for himself, and says plainly what he thinks, has some merit as a critic. This, it is true, is about all that can be said for such criticism as that on *Lycidas*, which is a delicious example of the wrong way of applying strong sense to inappropriate topics. Nothing can be truer in a sense, and nothing less relevant.

"In this poem," he says, "there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are easily exhausted, and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines?—

We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a-field and had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found.

"Among the flocks and copses and flowers appear the heathen deities: Jove and Phoebus, Neptune and *Æolus*, with a long train of mythological imagery such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge or less exercise invention than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; how one god

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asks another god what has become of Lycidas, and neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honour."

This is of course utterly outrageous, and yet much of it is undeniably true. To explain why, in spite of truth, *Lycidas* is a wonderful poem, would be to go pretty deeply into the theory of poetic expression. Most critics prefer simply to shriek, being at any rate safe from the errors of independent judgment.

The general effect of the book, however, is not to be inferred from this or some other passages of antiquated and eccentric criticism. It is the shrewd sense everywhere cropping up which is really delightful. The keen remarks upon life and character, though, perhaps, rather too severe in tone, are worthy of a vigorous mind, stored with much experience of many classes, and braced by constant exercise in the conversational arena. Passages everywhere abound which, though a little more formal in expression, have the forcible touch of his best conversational sallies. Some of the prejudices, which are expressed more pithily in *Boswell*, are defended by a reasoned exposition in the *Lives*. Sentence is passed with the true judicial air; and if he does not convince us of his complete impartiality, he at least bases his decisions upon solid and worthy grounds. It would be too much, for example, to expect that Johnson should sympathize with the grand republicanism of Milton, or pardon a man who defended the execution of the blessed Martyr. He failed, therefore, to satisfy the ardent admirers of the great poet. Yet his judgment is not harsh or ungenerous, but, at worst, the judgment of a man striving to be just, in spite of some inevitable want of sympathy.

The quality of Johnson's incidental remarks may be

inferred from one or two brief extracts. Here is an observation which Johnson must have had many chances of verifying. Speaking of Dryden's money difficulties, he says, "It is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hone is always liberal, and they that trust her promises, make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow."

Here is another shrewd comment upon the compliments paid to Halifax, of whom Pope says in the character of Bufo,—

Fed with soft dedications all day long,
Horace and he went hand and hand in song.

"To charge all unmerited praise with the guilt of flattery, or to suppose that the encomiast always knows and feels the falsehoods of his assertions, is surely to discover great ignorance of human nature and of human life. In determinations depending not on rules, but on reference and comparison, judgment is always in some degree subject to affection. Very near to admiration is the wish to admire.

"Every man willingly gives value to the praise which he receives, and considers the sentence passed in his favour as the sentence of discernment. We admire in a friend that understanding that selected us for confidence; we admire more in a patron that bounty which, instead of scattering bounty indiscriminately, directed it to us; and if the patron be an author, those performances which gratitude forbids us to blame, affection will easily dispose us to exalt.

"To these prejudices, hardly culpable, interest adds a power always operating, though not always, because not willingly, perceived. The modesty of praise gradually

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wears away ; and, perhaps, the pride of patronage may be in time so increased that modest praise will no longer please.

"Many a blandishment was practised upon Halifax, which he would never have known had he no other attractions than those of his poetry, of which a short time has withered the beauties. It would now be esteemed no honour by a contributor to the monthly bundles of verses, to be told that, in strains either familiar or solemn, he sings like Halifax."

I will venture to make a longer quotation from the life of Pope, which gives, I think, a good impression of his manner :—

"Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed ; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him.

"But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view ; and certainly what we hide from ourselves, we do not show to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse.

"In the eagerness of conversation, the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered. In

the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down by design to depreciate his own character.

"Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known, and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them. To charge those favourable representations which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would show more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts while they are general are right, and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

"If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity requires something to be writter. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition*. To know

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whether he disentangles himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison. One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when 'he has just nothing else to do,' yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he 'had always some poetical scheme in his head.' It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestic related that, in the dreadful winter of '40, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper lest he should lose a thought.

"He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped he did despise them. As he happened to live in two reigns when the court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings, and proclaims that 'he never sees courts.' Yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, 'How he could love a prince while he disliked kings.'"

Johnson's best poetry is the versified expression of the tone of sentiment with which we are already familiar. The *Vanity of Human Wishes* is, perhaps, the finest poem written since Pope's time and in Pope's manner, with the exception of Goldsmith's still finer performances.

Johnson, it need hardly be said, has not Goldsmith's exquisite fineness of touch and delicacy of sentiment. He is often ponderous and verbose, and one feels that the mode of expression is not that which is most congenial; and yet the vigour of thought makes itself felt through rather clumsy modes of utterance. Here is one of the best passages, in which he illustrates the vanity of military glory:—

On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes let Swedish Charles decide;
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign:
Peace counts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain.
"Think nothing gain'd," he cries, "till nought remain;
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky."
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realms of Frost.
He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay—
Hide, blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day!
The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemn'd a needy supplicant to wait,
While ladies interpose and slaves debate—
But did not Chance at length her error mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress and a dubious hand;

He left the name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral and adorn a tale.

The concluding passage may also fitly conclude this survey of Johnson's writings. The sentiment is less gloomy than is usual, but it gives the answer which he would have given in his calmer moods to the perplexed riddle of life ; and, in some form or other, it is, perhaps, the best or the only answer that can be given :—

Where, then, shall Hope and Fear their objects find ?
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind ?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate ?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise ?
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies ?
Inquirer cease ; petitions yet remain
Which Heaven may hear, nor deem religion vain ;
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,*
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice
Safe in His power whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer.
Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,
Secure whate'er He gives—He gives the best.
Yet when the scene of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions and a will resign'd ;
For Love, which scarce collective men can fill ;
For Patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill ;
For Faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts Death kind nature's signal of retreat.
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
These goods He grants who grants the power to gain ;
With these Celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

THE END.

B A C O N

BY

R. W. CHURCH

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

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PREFACE.

IN preparing this sketch it is needless to say how deeply I am indebted to Mr. Spedding and Mr. Ellis, the last editors of Bacon's writings, the very able and painstaking commentators, the one on Bacon's life, the other on his philosophy. It is impossible to overstate the affectionate care and high intelligence and honesty with which Mr. Spedding has brought together and arranged the materials for an estimate of Bacon's character. In the result, in spite of the force and ingenuity of much of his pleading, I find myself most reluctantly obliged to differ from him; it seems to me to be a case where the French saying, cited by Bacon in one of his commonplace books, holds good — "*Par trop se débattre, la vérité se perd.*"¹ But this does not diminish the debt of gratitude which all who are interested about Bacon must owe to Mr. Spedding. I wish also to acknowledge the assistance which I have received from Mr. Gardiner's *History of England* and Mr. Fowler's edition of the *Novum Organum*; and not least from M. de Rémusat's work on Bacon, which seems to me the most complete and the most just estimate both of Bacon's char-

¹ *Promus*: edited by Mrs. H. Pott, p. 475.

acter and work which has yet appeared; though even in this clear and dispassionate survey we are reminded by some misconceptions, strange in M. de Rémusat, how what one nation takes for granted is incomprehensible to its neighbour; and what a gap there is still, even in matters of philosophy and literature, between the whole Continent and ourselves—

"Penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos."

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BACON.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

THE life of Francis Bacon is one which it is a pain to write or to read. It is the life of a man endowed with as rare a combination of noble gifts as ever was bestowed on a human intellect; the life of one with whom the whole purpose of living and of every day's work was to do great things to enlighten and elevate his race, to enrich it with new powers, to lay up in store for all ages to come a source of blessings which should never fail or dry up; it was the life of a man who had high thoughts of the ends and methods of law and government, and with whom the general and public good was regarded as the standard by which the use of public power was to be measured; the life of a man who had struggled hard and successfully for the material prosperity and opulence which makes work easy and gives a man room and force for carrying out his purposes. All his life long his first and never-sleeping passion was the romantic and splendid ambition after knowledge, for the conquest of nature and for the service of man; gathering up in himself the spirit and longings and efforts of all discoverers and inventors of the arts, as

they are symbolised in the mythical Prometheus. He rose to the highest place and honour; and yet that place and honour were but the fringe and adornment of all that made him great. It is difficult to imagine a grander and more magnificent career; and his name ranks among the few chosen examples of human achievement. And yet it was not only an unhappy life; it was a poor life. We expect that such an overwhelming weight of glory should be borne up by a character corresponding to it in strength and nobleness. But that is not what we find. No one ever had a greater idea of what he was made for, or was fired with a greater desire to devote himself to it. He was all this. And yet being all this, seeing deep into man's worth, his capacities, his greatness, his weakness, his sins, he was not true to what he knew. He cringed to such a man as Buckingham. He sold himself to the corrupt and ignominious Government of James I. He was willing to be employed to hunt to death a friend like Essex, guilty, deeply guilty, to the State, but to Bacon the most loving and generous of benefactors. With his eyes open he gave himself up without resistance to a system unworthy of him; he would not see what was evil in it, and chose to call its evil good; and he was its first and most signal victim.

Bacon has been judged with merciless severity. But he has also been defended by an advocate whose name alone is almost a guarantee for the justness of the cause which he takes up, and the innocency of the client for whom he argues. Mr. Spedding devoted nearly a lifetime, and all the resources of a fine intellect and an earnest conviction, to make us revere as well as admire Bacon. But it is vain. It is vain to fight against the facts of his life: his words, his letters. "Men are made

up," says a keen observer, "of professions, gifts, and talents; and also of *themselves*." ¹ With all his greatness, his splendid genius, his magnificent ideas, his enthusiasm for truth, his passion to be the benefactor of his kind; with all the charm that made him loved by good and worthy friends, amiable, courteous, patient, delightful as a companion, ready to take any trouble — there was in Bacon's "self" a deep and fatal flaw. He was a pleaser of men. There was in him that subtle fault, noted and named both by philosophy and religion in the *ἀρεσκος* of Aristotle, the *ἀνθρωπάρεσκος* of St. Paul, which is more common than it is pleasant to think, even in good people, but which if it becomes dominant in a character is ruinous to truth and power. He was one of the men — there are many of them — who are unable to release their imagination from the impression of present and immediate power, face to face with themselves. It seems as if he carried into conduct the leading rule of his philosophy of nature, *parendo vincitur*. In both worlds, moral and physical, he felt himself encompassed by vast forces, irresistible by direct opposition. Men whom he wanted to bring round to his purposes were as strange, as refractory, as obstinate, as impenetrable as the phenomena of the natural world. It was no use attacking in front, and by a direct trial of strength, people like Elizabeth or Cecil or James; he might as well think of forcing some natural power in defiance of natural law. The first word of his teaching about nature is that she must be won by observation of her tendencies and demands; the same radical disposition of temper reveals itself in his dealings with men: they, too, must be won by yielding to them, by adapting himself to their moods and ends; by spying into the drift of their

¹ Dr. Mozley.

humour, by subtly and pliantly falling in with it, by circuitous and indirect processes, the fruit of vigilance and patient thought. He thought to direct, while submitting apparently to be directed. But he mistook his strength. Nature and man are different powers, and under different laws. He chose to please man, and not to follow what his soul must have told him was the better way. He wanted, in his dealings with men, that sincerity on which he insisted so strongly in his dealings with nature and knowledge. And the ruin of a great life was the consequence.

Francis Bacon was born in London on the 22d of January, 15⁶⁰/₈₁, three years before Galileo. He was born at York House, in the Strand; the house which, though it belonged to the Archbishops of York, had been lately tenanted by Lord Keepers and Lord Chancellors, in which Bacon himself afterwards lived as Lord Chancellor, and which passed after his fall into the hands of the Duke of Buckingham, who has left his mark in the Water Gate which is now seen, far from the river, in the garden of the Thames Embankment. His father was Sir Nicholas Bacon, Elizabeth's first Lord Keeper, the fragment of whose effigy in the Crypt of St. Paul's is one of the few relics of the old Cathedral before the fire. His uncle by marriage was that William Cecil who was to be Lord Burghley. His mother, the sister of Lady Cecil, was one of the daughters of Sir Antony Cook, a person deep in the confidence of the reforming party, who had been tutor of Edward VI. She was a remarkable woman, highly accomplished after the fashion of the ladies of her party, and as would become her father's daughter and the austere and laborious family to which she belonged. She was "exquisitely skilled in the Greek and Latin tongues;"

she was passionately religious, according to the uncompromising religion which the exiles had brought back with them from Geneva, Strasburg, and Zurich, and which saw in Calvin's theology a solution of all the difficulties, and in his discipline a remedy for all the evils, of mankind. This means that his boyhood from the first was passed among the high places of the world—at one of the greatest crises of English history—in the very centre and focus of its agitations. He was brought up among the chiefs and leaders of the rising religion, in the houses of the greatest and most powerful persons of the State, and naturally, as their child, at times in the Court of the Queen, who joked with him, and called him "her young Lord Keeper." It means also that the religious atmosphere in which he was brought up was that of the nascent and aggressive Puritanism, which was not satisfied with the compromises of the Elizabethan Reformation, and which saw in the moral poverty and incapacity of many of its chiefs a proof against the great traditional system of the Church which Elizabeth was loath to part with, and which, in spite of all its present and inevitable shortcomings, her political sagacity taught her to reverence and trust.

At the age of twelve he was sent to Cambridge, and put under Whitgift at Trinity. It is a question which recurs continually to readers about those times and their precocious boys, what boys were then? For whatever was the learning of the universities, these boys took their place with men and consorted with them, sharing such knowledge as men had, and performing exercises and hearing lectures according to the standard of men. Grotius at eleven was the pupil and companion of Scaliger and the learned band of Leyden; at fourteen he was part of

the company which went with the ambassadors of the States-General to Henry IV.; at sixteen he was called to the bar, he published an out-of-the-way Latin writer, Martianus Capella, with a learned commentary, and he was the correspondent of De Thou. When Bacon was hardly sixteen he was admitted to the Society of "Ancients" of Gray's Inn, and he went in the household of Sir Amyas Paulet, the Queen's Ambassador, to France. He thus spent two years in France, not in Paris alone, but at Blois, Tours, and Poitiers. If this was precocious, there is no indication that it was thought precocious. It only meant that clever and promising boys were earlier associated with men in important business than is customary now. The old and the young heads began to work together sooner. Perhaps they felt that there was less time to spare. In spite of instances of longevity, life was shorter for the average of busy men, for the conditions of life were worse.

Two recollections only have been preserved of his early years. One is that, as he told his chaplain, Dr. Rawley, late in life, he had discovered, as far back as his Cambridge days, the "unfruitfulness" of Aristotle's method. It is easy to make too much of this. It is not uncommon for undergraduates to criticise their textbooks; it was the fashion with clever men, as, for instance, Montaigne, to talk against Aristotle without knowing anything about him; it is not uncommon for men who have worked out a great idea to find traces of it, on precarious grounds, in their boyish thinking. Still, it is worth noting that Bacon himself believed that his fundamental quarrel with Aristotle had begun with the first efforts of thought, and that this is the one recollection remaining of his early tendency in speculation. The other is more trustworthy,

and exhibits that inventiveness which was characteristic of his mind. He tells us in the *De Augmentis* that when he was in France he occupied himself with devising an improved system of cypher-writing—a thing of daily and indispensable use for rival statesmen and rival intriguers. But the investigation, with its call on the calculating and combining faculties, would also interest him, as an example of the discovery of new powers by the human mind.

In the beginning of 1579 Bacon, at eighteen, was called home by his father's death. This was a great blow to his prospects. His father had not accomplished what he had intended for him, and Francis Bacon was left with only a younger son's "narrow portion." What was worse, he lost one whose credit would have served him in high places. He entered on life, not as he might have expected, independent and with court favour on his side, but with his very livelihood to gain—a competitor at the bottom of the ladder for patronage and countenance. This great change in his fortunes told very unfavourably on his happiness, his usefulness, and, it must be added, on his character. He accepted it, indeed, manfully, and at once threw himself into the study of the law as the profession by which he was to live. But the law, though it was the only path open to him, was not the one which suited his genius, or his object in life. To the last he worked hard and faithfully, but with doubtful reputation as to his success, and certainly against the grain. And this was not the worst. To make up for the loss of that start in life of which his father's untimely death had deprived him, he became, for almost the rest of his life, the most importunate and most untiring of suitors.

In 1579 or 1580 Bacon took up his abode at Gray's Inn, which for a long time was his home. He went through

the various steps of his profession. He began, what he never discontinued, his earnest and humble appeals to his relative the great Lord Burghley, to employ him in the Queen's service, or to put him in some place of independence: through Lord Burghley's favour he seems to have been pushed on at his Inn, where, in 1586, he was a Benchler; and in 1584 he came into Parliament for Melcombe Regis. He took some small part in Parliament; but the only record of his speeches is contained in a surly note of Recorder Fleetwood, who writes as an old member might do of a young one talking nonsense. He sat again for Liverpool in the year of the Armada (1588), and his name begins to appear in the proceedings. These early years, we know, were busy ones. In them Bacon laid the foundation of his observations and judgments on men and affairs; and in them the great purpose and work of his life was conceived and shaped. But they are more obscure years than might have been expected in the case of a man of Bacon's genius and family, and of such eager and unconcealed desire to rise and be at work. No doubt he was often pinched in his means; his health was weak, and he was delicate and fastidious in his care of it. Plunged in work, he lived very much as a recluse in his chambers, and was thought to be reserved, and what those who disliked him called arrogant. But Bacon was ambitious—ambitious, in the first place, of the Queen's notice and favour. He was versatile, brilliant, courtly, besides being his father's son; and considering how rapidly bold and brilliant men were able to push their way and take the Queen's favour by storm, it seems strange that Bacon should have remained fixedly in the shade. Something must have kept him back. Burghley was not the man to neglect a useful instrument with such good will to serve him. But all

that Mr. Spedding's industry and profound interest in the subject has brought together throws but an uncertain light on Bacon's long disappointment. Was it the rooted misgiving of a man of affairs like Burghley at that passionate contempt of all existing knowledge, and that undoubting confidence in his own power to make men know, as they never had known, which Bacon was even now professing? Or was it something soft and over-obsequious in character which made the uncle, who knew well what men he wanted, disinclined to encourage and employ the nephew? Was Francis not hard enough, not narrow enough, too full of ideas, too much alive to the shakiness of current doctrines and arguments on religion and policy? Was he too open to new impressions, made by objections or rival views? Or did he show signs of wanting backbone to stand amid difficulties and threatening prospects? Did Burghley see something in him of the pliability which he could remember as the serviceable quality of his own young days—which suited those days of rapid change, but not days when change was supposed to be over, and when the qualities which were wanted were those which resist and defy it? The only thing that is clear is that Burghley, in spite of Bacon's continual applications, abstained to the last from advancing his fortunes.

Whether employed by government or not, Bacon began at this time to prepare those carefully-written papers on the public affairs of the day, of which he has left a good many. In our day they would have been pamphlets or magazine articles. In his they were circulated in manuscript, and only occasionally printed. The first of any importance is a letter of advice to the Queen, about the year 1585, on the policy to be followed with a view to keeping in check the Roman Catholic interest at home and abroad. It is calm, sagacious,

and, according to the fashion of the age, slightly Machiavellian. But the first subject on which Bacon exhibited his characteristic qualities, his appreciation of facts, his balance of thought, and his power, when not personally committed, of standing aloof from the ordinary prejudices and assumptions of men round him, was the religious condition and prospects of the English Church. Bacon had been brought up in a Puritan household of the strictest sect. His mother was an earnest, severe, and intolerant Calvinist, deep in the interests and cause of her party, bitterly resenting all attempts to keep in order its pretensions. She was a masterful woman, claiming to meddle with her brother-in-law's policy, and though a most affectionate mother she was a woman of violent and ungovernable temper. Her letters to her son Antony, whom she loved passionately, but whom she suspected of keeping dangerous and papistical company, show us the imperious spirit in which she claimed to interfere with her sons; and they show also that in Francis she did not find all the deference which she looked for. Recommending Antony to frequent "the religious exercises of the sincerer sort," she warns him not to follow his brother's advice or example. Antony was advised to use prayer twice a day with his servants. "Your brother," she adds, "is too negligent therein." She is anxious about Antony's health, and warns him not to fall into his brother's ill-ordered habits: "I verily think your brother's weak stomach to digest hath been much caused and confirmed by untimely going to bed, and then musing *nescio quid* when he should sleep, and then in consequent by late rising and long lying in bed, whereby his men are made slothful and himself continueth sickly. But my sons haste not to hearken to their mother's good counsel in time to prevent." It seems clear that Francis Bacon

had shown his mother that not only in the care of his health, but in his judgment on religious matters, he meant to go his own way. Mr. Spedding thinks that she must have had much influence on him; it seems more likely that he resented her interference, and that the hard and narrow arrogance which she read into the Gospel produced in him a strong reaction. Bacon was obsequious to the tyranny of power, but he was never inclined to bow to the tyranny of opinion; and the tyranny of Puritan infallibility was the last thing to which he was likely to submit. His mother would have wished him to sit under Cartwright and Travers. The friend of his choice was the Anglican preacher, Dr. Andrewes, to whom he submitted all his works, and whom he called his "inquisitor general;" and he was proud to sign himself the pupil of Whitgift, and to write for him,—the archbishop of whom Lady Bacon wrote to her son Antony, veiling the dangerous sentiment in Greek, "that he was the ruin of the Church, for he loved his own glory more than Christ's."

Certainly, in the remarkable paper on *Controversies in the Church* (1589), Bacon had ceased to feel or to speak as a Puritan. The paper is an attempt to compose the controversy by pointing out the mistakes in judgment, in temper, and in method on both sides. It is entirely unlike what a Puritan would have written: it is too moderate, too tolerant, too neutral, though like most essays of conciliation it is open to the rejoinder from both sides—certainly from the Puritan—that it begs the question by assuming the unimportance of the matters about which each contended with so much zeal. It is the confirmation, but also the complement, and in some ways the correction of Hooker's contemporary view of the quarrel which was threatening the life of the English Church, and not even

Hooker could be so comprehensive and so fair. For Hooker had to defend much that was indefensible: he had to defend a great traditional system, just convulsed by a most tremendous shock—a shock and alteration, as Bacon says, “the greatest and most dangerous that can be in a State,” in which old clews and habits and rules were confused and all but lost; in which a frightful amount of personal incapacity and worthlessness had, from sheer want of men, risen to the high places of the Church; and in which force and violence, sometimes of the most hateful kind, had come to be accepted as ordinary instruments in the government of souls. Hooker felt too strongly the unfairness, the folly, the intolerant aggressiveness, the malignity of his opponents—he was too much alive to the wrongs inflicted by them on his own side, and to the incredible absurdity of their arguments—to do justice to what was only too real in the charges and complaints of those opponents. But Bacon came from the very heart of the Puritan camp. He had seen the inside of Puritanism—its best as well as its worst side. He witnesses to the humility, the conscientiousness, the labour, the learning, the hatred of sin and wrong, of many of its preachers. He had heard, and heard with sympathy, all that could be urged against the bishops’ administration, and against a system of legal oppression in the name of the Church. Where religious elements were so confusedly mixed, and where each side had apparently so much to urge on behalf of its claims, he saw the deep mistake of loftily ignoring facts, and of want of patience and forbearance with those who were scandalised at abuses, while the abuses, in some cases monstrous, were tolerated and turned to profit. Towards the bishops and their policy, though his language is very respectful, for the government was implicated, he

is very severe. They punish and restrain, but they do not themselves mend their ways or supply what was wanting; and theirs are "*injuriae potentiorum*"—"injuries come from them that have the upperhand." But Hooker himself did not put his finger more truly and more surely on the real mischief of the Puritan movement: on the immense outbreak in it of unreasonable party spirit and visible personal ambition—"these are the true successors of Diotrefes and not my lord bishops"—on the gradual development of the Puritan theory till it came at last to claim a supremacy as unquestionable and intolerant as that of the Papacy; on the servile affectation of the fashions of Geneva and Strasburg; on the poverty and foolishness of much of the Puritan teaching—its inability to satisfy the great questions which it raised in the soul, its unworthy dealing with Scripture—"naked examples, conceited inferences, and forced allusions, which mine into all certainty of religion"—"the word, the bread of life, they toss up and down, they break it not;" on their undervaluing of moral worth, if it did not speak in their phraseology—"as they censure virtuous men by the names of *civil* and *moral*, so do they censure men truly and godly wise, who see into the vanity of their assertions, by the name of *politiques*, saying that their wisdom is but carnal and savouring of man's brain." Bacon saw that the Puritans were aiming at a tyranny which, if they established it, would be more comprehensive, more searching, and more cruel than that of the older systems; but he thought it a remote and improbable danger, and that they might safely be tolerated for the work they did in education and preaching, "because the work of exhortation doth chiefly rest upon these men, and they have a zeal and hate of sin." But he ends by warning them lest "that be true which

one of their adversaries said, *that they have but two small wants—knowledge and love.*” One complaint that he makes of them is a curious instance of the changes of feeling, or at least of language, on moral subjects. He accuses them of “having pronounced generally, and without difference, all untruths unlawful,” forgetful of the Egyptian midwives, and Rahab, and Solomon, and even of Him “who, the more to touch the hearts of the disciples with a holy dalliance, made as though he would have passed Emmaus.” He is thinking of their failure to apply a principle which was characteristic of his mode of thought, that even a statement about a virtue like veracity “hath limit as all things else have;” but it is odd to find Bacon bringing against the Puritans the converse of the charge which his age, and Pascal afterwards, brought against the Jesuits. The essay, besides being a picture of the times as regards religion, is an example of what was to be Bacon’s characteristic strength and weakness: his strength in lifting up a subject which had been degraded by mean and wrangling disputations, into a higher and larger light, and bringing to bear on it great principles and the results of the best human wisdom and experience, expressed in weighty and pregnant maxims; his weakness in forgetting, as, in spite of his philosophy, he so often did, that the grandest major premises need well-proved and ascertained minors, and that the enunciation of a principle is not the same thing as the application of it. Doubtless there is truth in his closing words; but each party would have made the comment that what he had to prove, and had not proved, was that by following his counsel they would “love the whole world better than a part.”

“Let them not fear . . . the fond calumny of *neutrality*; but let them know that is true which is said by a wise man, *that neutrals*

in contentions are either better or worse than either side. These things have I in all sincerity and simplicity set down touching the controversies which now trouble the Church of England; and that without all art and insinuation, and therefore not like to be grateful to either part. Notwithstanding, I trust what has been said shall find a correspondence in their minds which are not embarked in partiality, and which *love the whole better than a part.*"

Up to this time, though Bacon had showed himself capable of taking a broad and calm view of questions which it was the fashion among good men, and men who were in possession of the popular ear, to treat with narrowness and heat, there was nothing to disclose his deeper thoughts—nothing foreshadowed the purpose which was to fill his life. He had, indeed, at the age of twenty-five, written a "youthful" philosophical essay, to which he gave the pompous title "*Temporis Partus Maximus*," "the Greatest Birth of Time." But he was thirty-one when we first find an indication of the great idea and the great projects which were to make his name famous. This indication is contained in an earnest appeal to Lord Burghley for some help which should not be illusory. Its words are distinct and far-reaching, and they are the first words from him which tell us what was in his heart. The letter has the interest to us of the first announcement of a promise which, to ordinary minds, must have appeared visionary and extravagant, but which was so splendidly fulfilled; the first distant sight of that sea of knowledge which henceforth was opened to mankind, but on which no man, as he thought, had yet entered. It contains the famous avowal—"I have taken all knowledge to be my province"—made in the confidence born of long and silent meditations and questionings, but made in a simple good faith which is as far as possible from vain boastfulness.

"MY LORD,—With as much confidence as mine own honest and faithful devotion unto your service and your honourable correspondence unto me and my poor estate can breed in a man, do I commend myself unto your Lordship. I wax now somewhat ancient: one and thirty years is a great deal of sand in the hour glass. My health, I thank God, I find confirmed; and I do not fear that action shall impair it, because I account my ordinary course of study and meditation to be more painful than most parts of action are. I ever bare a mind (in some middle place that I could discharge) to serve her Majesty, not as a man born under Sol, that loveth honour, nor under Jupiter, that loveth business (for the contemplative planet carrieth me away wholly), but as a man born under an excellent sovereign that deserveth the dedication of all men's abilities. Besides, I do not find in myself so much self-love, but that the greater parts of my thoughts are to deserve well (if I be able) of my friends, and namely of your Lordship; who, being the Atlas of this commonwealth, the honour of my house, and the second founder of my poor estate, I am tied by all duties, both of a good patriot, and of an unworthy kinsman, and of an obliged servant, to employ whatsoever I am to do you service. Again, the meanness of my estate doth somewhat move me; for though I cannot accuse myself that I am either prodigal or slothful, yet my health is not to spend, nor my course to get. Lastly, I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends as I have moderate civil ends; for I have taken all knowledge to be my province; and if I could purge it of two sorts of rovers, whereof the one with frivolous disputations, confutations, and verborities, the other with blind experiments and auricular traditions and impostures, hath committed so many spoils, I hope I should bring in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable inventions and discoveries: the best state of that province. This, whether it be curiosity or vain glory, or nature, or (if one take it favourably) *philanthropia*, is so fixed in my mind as it cannot be removed. And I do easily see, that place of any reasonable countenance doth bring commandment of more wits than of a man's own; which is the thing I greatly affect. And for your Lordship, perhaps you shall not find more strength and less encounter in any other. And if your Lordship shall find now, or at any time, that I do seek or affect any place whereunto any that is nearer unto your Lordship shall be concurrent, say then that I am a most dishonest man. And

If your Lordship will not carry me on, I will not do as Anaxagoras did, who reduced himself with contemplation unto voluntary poverty, but this I will do—I will sell the inheritance I have, and purchase some lease of quick revenue, or some office of gain that shall be executed by deputy, and so give over all care of service, and become some sorry book-maker, or a true pioneer in that mine of truth which (he said) lay so deep. This which I have writ unto your Lordship is rather thoughts than words, being set down without all art, disguising, or reservation. Wherein I have done honour both to your Lordship's wisdom, in judging that that will be best believed of your Lordship which is truest, and to your Lordship's good nature, in retaining nothing from you. And even so I wish your Lordship all happiness, and to myself means and occasions to be added to my faithful desire to do you service. From my lodgings at Gray's Inn."

This letter to his unsympathetic and suspicious, but probably not unfriendly relative, is the key to Bacon's plan of life; which, with numberless changes of form, he followed to the end. That is, a profession, steadily, seriously, and laboriously kept to, in order to provide the means of living; and beyond that, as the ultimate and real end of his life, the pursuit, in a way unattempted before, of all possible human knowledge, and of the methods to improve it and make it sure and fruitful. And so his life was carried out. On the one hand it was a continual and pertinacious seeking after government employment, which could give credit to his name and put money in his pocket—attempts by general behaviour, by professional services when the occasion offered, by putting his original and fertile pen at the service of the government, to win confidence, and to overcome the manifest indisposition of those in power to think that a man who cherished the chimera of universal knowledge could be a useful public servant. On the other hand, all the while, in the crises of his disappointment or triumph, the one great subject lay next his heart,

filling him with fire and passion—how really to know, and to teach men to know indeed, and to use their knowledge so as to command nature; the great hope to be the reformer and restorer of knowledge in a more wonderful sense than the world had yet seen in the reformation of learning and religion, and in the spread of civilised order in the great states of the Renaissance time. To this he gave his best and deepest thoughts; for this he was for ever accumulating, and for ever rearranging and reshaping those masses of observation and inquiry and invention and mental criticism which were to come in as parts of the great design which he had seen in the visions of his imagination, and of which at last he was only able to leave noble fragments, incomplete after numberless recastings. This was not indeed the only, but it was the predominant and governing, interest of his life. Whether as solicitor for Court favour or public office; whether drudging at the work of the law or managing State prosecutions; whether writing an opportune pamphlet against Spain or Father Parsons, or inventing a “device” for his Inn or for Lord Essex to give amusement to Queen Elizabeth; whether fulfilling his duties as member of Parliament or rising step by step to the highest places in the Council Board and the State; whether in the pride of success or under the amazement of unexpected and irreparable overthrow, while it seemed as if he was only measuring his strength against the rival ambitions of the day, in the same spirit and with the same object as his competitors, the true motive of all his eagerness and all his labours was not theirs. He wanted to be powerful, and still more to be rich; but he wanted to be so, because without power and without money he could not follow what was to him the only thing worth following on earth—a real knowledge of the amazing and

hitherto almost unknown world in which he had to live. Bacon, to us, at least, at this distance, who can only judge him from partial and imperfect knowledge, often seems to fall far short of what a man should be. He was not one of the high-minded and proud searchers after knowledge and truth, like Descartes, who were content to accept a frugal independence so that their time and their thoughts might be their own. Bacon was a man of the world, and wished to live in and with the world. He threatened sometimes retirement, but never with any very serious intention. In the Court was his element, and there were his hopes. Often there seems little to distinguish him from the ordinary place-hunters, obsequious and selfish, of every age; little to distinguish him from the servile and insincere flatterers, of whom he himself complains, who crowded the antechambers of the great Queen, content to submit with smiling face and thankful words to the insolence of her waywardness and temper, in the hope, more often disappointed than not, of hitting her taste on some lucky occasion, and being rewarded for the accident by a place of gain or honour. Bacon's history, as read in his letters, is not an agreeable one; after every allowance made for the fashions of language and the necessities of a suitor, there is too much of insincere profession of disinterestedness, too much of exaggerated profession of admiration and devoted service, too much of disparagement and insinuation against others, for a man who respected himself. He submitted too much to the miserable conditions of rising which he found. But, nevertheless, it must be said that it was for no mean object, for no mere private selfishness or vanity, that he endured all this. He strove hard to be a great man and a rich man. But it was that he might have his hands free and strong and well furnished

to carry forward the double task of overthrowing ignorance and building up the new and solid knowledge on which his heart was set—that immense conquest of nature on behalf of man which he believed to be possible, and of which he believed himself to have the key.

The letter to Lord Burghley did not help him much. He received the reversion of a place, the Clerkship of the Council, which did not become vacant for twenty years. But these years of service declined and place withheld were busy and useful ones. What he was most intent upon, and what occupied his deepest and most serious thought, was unknown to the world round him, and probably not very intelligible to his few intimate friends, such as his brother Antony and Dr. Andrewes. Meanwhile he placed his pen at the disposal of the authorities, and though they regarded him more as a man of study than of practice and experience, they were glad to make use of it. His versatile genius found another employment. Besides his affluence in topics, he had the liveliest fancy and most active imagination. But that he wanted the sense of poetic fitness and melody, he might almost be supposed, with his reach and play of thought, to have been capable, as is maintained in some eccentric modern theories, of writing Shakespeare's plays. No man ever had a more imaginative power of illustration drawn from the most remote and most unlikely analogies; analogies often of the quaintest and most unexpected kind, but often also not only felicitous in application but profound and true. His powers were early called upon for some of those sportive compositions in which that age delighted on occasions of rejoicing or festival. Three of his contributions to these "devices" have been preserved—two of them composed in honour of the Queen, as "triumphs," offered by

Lord Essex, one probably in 1592 and another in 1595; a third for a Gray's Inn revel in 1594. The "devices" themselves were of the common type of the time, extravagant, odd, full of awkward allegory and absurd flattery, and running to a prolixity which must make modern lovers of amusement wonder at the patience of those days; but the "discourses" furnished by Bacon are full of fine observation and brilliant thought and wit and happy illustration, which, fantastic as the general conception is, raises them far above the level of such fugitive trifles.

Among the fragmentary papers belonging to this time which have come down, not the least curious are those which throw light on his manner of working. While he was following out the great ideas which were to be the basis of his philosophy, he was as busy and as painstaking in fashioning the instruments by which they were to be expressed; and in these papers we have the records and specimens of this preparation. He was a great collector of sentences, proverbs, quotations, sayings, illustrations, anecdotes, and he seems to have read sometimes simply to gather phrases and apt words. He jots down at random any good and pointed remark which comes into his thought or his memory; at another time he groups a set of stock quotations with a special drift, bearing on some subject, such as the faults of universities or the habits of lawyers. Nothing is too minute for his notice. He brings together in great profusion mere forms, varied turns of expression, heads and tails of clauses and paragraphs, transitions, connections; he notes down fashions of compliment, of excuse or repartee, even morning and evening salutations; he records neat and convenient opening and concluding sentences, ways of speaking more adapted than others to give a special colour or direction

to what the speaker or writer has to say—all that hook-and-eye work which seems so trivial and passes so unnoticed as a matter of course, and which yet is often hard to reach, and which makes all the difference between tameness and liveliness, between clearness and obscurity—all the difference, not merely to the ease and naturalness, but often to the logical force of speech. These collections it was his way to sift and transcribe again and again, adding as well as omitting. From one of these, belonging to 1594 and the following years, the *Promus of Formularies and Elegancies*, Mr. Spedding has given curious extracts; and the whole collection has been recently edited by Mrs. Henry Pott. Thus it was that he prepared himself for what, as we read it, or as his audience heard it, seems the suggestion or recollection of the moment. Bacon was always much more careful of the value or aptness of a thought than of its appearing new and original. Of all great writers he least minds repeating himself, perhaps in the very same words; so that a simile, an illustration, a quotation pleases him, he returns to it—he is never tired of it; it obviously gives him satisfaction to introduce it again and again. These collections of odds and ends illustrate another point in his literary habits. His was a mind keenly sensitive to all analogies and affinities, impatient of a strict and rigid logical groove, but spreading as it were tentacles on all sides in quest of chance prey, and quickened into a whole system of imagination by the electric quiver imparted by a single word, at once the key and symbol of the thinking it had led to. And so he puts down word or phrase, so enigmatical to us who see it by itself, which to him would wake up a whole train of ideas, as he remembered the occasion of it—how at a certain time and place this word set the whole moving, seemed to

breathe new life and shed new light, and has remained the token, meaningless in itself, which reminds him of so much.

When we come to read his letters, his speeches, his works, we come continually on the results and proofs of this early labour. Some of the most memorable and familiar passages of his writings are to be traced from the storehouses which he filled in these years of preparation. An example of this correspondence between the note-book and the composition is to be seen in a paper belonging to this period, written apparently to form part of a masque, or as he himself calls it, a "Conference of Pleasure," and entitled the *Praise of Knowledge*. It is interesting because it is the first draught which we have from him of some of the leading ideas and most characteristic language about the defects and the improvement of knowledge, which were afterwards embodied in the *Advancement* and the *Novum Organum*. The whole spirit and aim of his great reform is summed up in the following fine passage:

"Facility to believe, impatience to doubt, temerity to assever, glory to know, doubt to contradict, end to gain, sloth to search, seeking things in words, resting in a part of nature—these and the like have been the things which have forbidden the happy match between the mind of man and the nature of things, and in place thereof have married it to vain notions and blind experiments. . . . Therefore, no doubt, the *sovereignty of man* lieth hid in knowledge; wherein many things are reserved which kings with their treasures cannot buy nor with their force command; their spials and intelligencers can give no news of them; their seamen and discoverers cannot sail where they grow. Now we govern nature in opinions, but we are thrall unto her in necessity; but if we could be led by her in invention, we should command her in action."

To the same occasion as the discourse on the *Praise of Knowledge* belongs, also, one in *Praise of the Queen*. As one is an early specimen of his manner of writing on

philosophy, so this is a specimen of what was equally characteristic of him—his political and historical writing. It is, in form, necessarily a panegyric, as high-flown and adulatory as such performances in those days were bound to be. But it is not only flattery. It fixes with true discrimination on the points in Elizabeth's character and reign which were really subjects of admiration and homage. Thus of her unquailing spirit at the time of the Spanish invasion—

“Lastly, see a Queen, that when her realm was to have been invaded by an army, the preparation whereof was like the travail of an elephant, the provisions infinite, the setting forth whereof was the terror and wonder of Europe; it was not seen that her cheer, her fashion, her ordinary manner was anything altered; not a cloud of that storm did appear in that countenance wherein peace doth ever shine; but with excellent assurance and advised security she inspired her council, animated her nobility, redoubled the courage of her people; still having this noble apprehension, not only that she would communicate her fortune with them, but that it was she that would protect them, and not they her; which she testified by no less demonstration than her presence in camp. Therefore that magnanimity that neither feareth greatness of alteration, nor the vows of conspirators, nor the power of the enemy, is more than heroical.”

These papers, though he put his best workmanship into them, as he invariably did with whatever he touched, were of an ornamental kind. But he did more serious work. In the year 1592 a pamphlet had been published on the Continent in Latin and English, *Responsio ad Edictum Reginae Angliæ*, with reference to the severe legislation which followed on the Armada, making such charges against the Queen and the Government as it was natural for the Roman Catholic party to make, and making them with the utmost virulence and unscrupulousness. It was supposed to be written by the ablest of the Roman pam-

phleteers, Father Parsons. The Government felt it to be a dangerous indictment, and Bacon was chosen to write the answer to it. He had additional interest in the matter, for the pamphlet made a special and bitter attack on Burghley, as the person mainly responsible for the Queen's policy. Bacon's reply is long and elaborate, taking up every charge, and reviewing from his own point of view the whole course of the struggle between the Queen and the supporters of the Roman Catholic interest abroad and at home. It cannot be considered an impartial review; besides that it was written to order, no man in England could then write impartially in that quarrel; but it is not more one-sided and uncandid than the pamphlet which it answers, and Bacon is able to recriminate with effect, and to show gross credulity and looseness of assertion on the part of the Roman Catholic advocate. But religion had too much to do with the politics of both sides for either to be able to come into the dispute with clean hands: the Roman Catholics meant much more than toleration, and the sanguinary punishments of the English law against priests and Jesuits were edged by something even keener than the fear of treason. But the paper contains some large surveys of public affairs, which probably no one at that time could write but Bacon. Bacon never liked to waste anything good which he had written; and much of what he had written in the panegyric in *Praise of the Queen* is made use of again, and transferred with little change to the pages of the *Observations on a Libel*.

CHAPTER II

BACON AND ELIZABETH.

THE last decade of the century, and almost of Elizabeth's reign (1590-1600), was an eventful one to Bacon's fortunes. In it the vision of his great design disclosed itself more and more to his imagination and hopes, and with more and more irresistible fascination. In it he made his first literary venture, the first edition of his *Essays* (1597), ten in number, the first-fruits of his early and ever watchful observation of men and affairs. These years, too, saw his first steps in public life, the first efforts to bring him into importance, the first great trials and tests of his character. They saw the beginning and they saw the end of his relations with the only friend who, at that time, recognised his genius and his purposes, certainly the only friend who ever pushed his claims; they saw the growth of a friendship which was to have so tragical a close, and they saw the beginnings and causes of a bitter personal rivalry which was to last through life, and which was to be a potent element hereafter in Bacon's ruin. The friend was the Earl of Essex. The competitor was the ablest, and also the most truculent and unscrupulous of English lawyers, Edward Coke.

While Bacon, in the shade, had been laying the foundations of his philosophy of nature, and vainly suing for legal or political employment, another man had been steady-

ly rising in the Queen's favour and carrying all before him at Court—Robert Devereux, Lord Essex; and with Essex Bacon had formed an acquaintance which had ripened into an intimate and affectionate friendship. We commonly think of Essex as a vain and insolent favourite, who did ill the greatest work given him to do—the reduction of Ireland; who did it ill from some unexplained reason of spite and mischief; and who, when called to account for it, broke out into senseless and idle rebellion. This was the end. But he was not always thus. He began life with great gifts and noble ends; he was a serious, modest, and large-minded student both of books and things, and he turned his studies to full account. He had imagination and love of enterprise, which gave him an insight into Bacon's ideas such as none of Bacon's contemporaries had. He was a man of simple and earnest religion; he sympathized most with the Puritans, because they were serious and because they were hardly used. Those who most condemn him acknowledge his nobleness and generosity of nature. Bacon in after days, when all was over between them, spoke of him as a man always *patientissimus veri*; "the more plainly and frankly you shall deal with my lord," he writes elsewhere, "not only in disclosing particulars, but in giving him *caveats* and admonishing him of any error which in this action he may commit (such is his lordship's nature), the better he will take it." "He must have seemed," says Mr. Spedding, a little too grandly, "in the eyes of Bacon like the hope of the world." The two men, certainly, became warmly attached. Their friendship came to be one of the closest kind, full of mutual services, and of genuine affection on both sides. It was not the relation of a great patron and useful dependant; it was, what might be expected in the two men, that of affectionate

equality. Each man was equally capable of seeing what the other was, and saw it. What Essex's feelings were towards Bacon the results showed. Bacon, in after years, repeatedly claimed to have devoted his whole time and labour to Essex's service. Holding him, he says, to be "the fittest instrument to do good to the State, I applied myself to him in a manner which I think rarely happeneth among men; neglecting the Queen's service, mine own fortune, and, in a sort, my vocation, I did nothing but advise and ruminate with myself . . . anything that might concern his lordship's honour, fortune, or service." The claim is far too wide. The "Queen's service" had hardly as yet come much in Bacon's way, and he never neglected it when it did come, nor his own fortune or vocation; his letters remain to attest his care in these respects. But no doubt Bacon was then as ready to be of use to Essex, the one man who seemed to understand and value him, as Essex was desirous to be of use to Bacon.

And it seemed as if Essex would have the ability as well as the wish. Essex was, without exception, the most brilliant man who ever appeared at Elizabeth's Court, and it seemed as if he were going to be the most powerful. Leicester was dead. Burghley was growing old, and indisposed for the adventures and levity which, with all her grand power of ruling, Elizabeth loved. She needed a favourite, and Essex was unfortunately marked out for what she wanted. He had Leicester's fascination, without his mean and cruel selfishness. He was as generous, as gallant, as quick to descry all great things in art and life, as Philip Sidney, with more vigour and fitness for active life than Sidney. He had not Raleigh's sad, dark depths of thought, but he had a daring courage equal to Raleigh's, without Raleigh's cynical contempt for mercy and honour. He

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had every personal advantage requisite for a time when intellect, and ready wit, and high-tempered valour, and personal beauty, and skill in affairs, with equal skill in amusements, were expected to go together in the accomplished courtier. And Essex was a man not merely to be courted and admired, to shine and dazzle, but to be loved. Elizabeth, with her strange and perverse emotional constitution, loved him, if she ever loved any one. Every one who served him loved him; and he was, as much as any one could be in those days, a popular favourite. Under better fortune he might have risen to a great height of character; in Elizabeth's Court he was fated to be ruined.

For in that Court all the qualities in him which needed control received daily stimulus, and his ardour and high-aiming temper turned into impatience and restless irritability. He had a mistress who was at one time in the humour to be treated as a tender woman, at another as an outrageous flirt, at another as the haughtiest and most imperious of queens; her mood varied, no one could tell how, and it was most dangerous to mistake it. It was part of her pleasure to find in her favourite a spirit as high, a humour as contradictory and determined, as her own; it was the charming contrast to the obsequiousness or the prudence of the rest; but no one could be sure at what unlooked-for moment, and how fiercely, she might resent in earnest a display of what she had herself encouraged. Essex was ruined for all real greatness by having to suit himself to this bewildering and most unwholesome and degrading waywardness. She taught him to think himself irresistible in opinion and in claims; she amused herself in teaching him how completely he was mistaken. Alternately spoiled and crossed, he learned to be exacting, unreasonable, absurd in his pettish resentments or brooding

sullenness. He learned to think that she must be dealt with by the same methods which she herself employed. The effect was not produced in a moment; it was the result of a courtiership of sixteen years. But it ended in corrupting a noble nature. Essex came to believe that she who cowed others must be frightened herself; that the stinging injustice which led a proud man to expect, only to see how he would behave when refused, deserved to be brought to reason by a counter-buffet as rough as her own insolent caprice. He drifted into discontent, into disaffection, into neglect of duty, into questionable schemings for the future of a reign that must shortly end, into criminal methods of guarding himself, of humbling his rivals and regaining influence. A "fatal impatience," as Bacon calls it, gave his rivals an advantage which, perhaps in self-defence, they could not fail to take; and that career, so brilliant, so full of promise of good, ended in misery, in dishonour, in remorse, on the scaffold of the Tower.

With this attractive and powerful person Bacon's fortunes, in the last years of the century, became more and more knit up. Bacon was now past thirty, Essex a few years younger. In spite of Bacon's apparent advantage and interest at Court, in spite of abilities, which, though his genius was not yet known, his contemporaries clearly recognised, he was still a struggling and unsuccessful man: ambitious to rise, for no unworthy reasons, but needy, in weak health, with careless and expensive habits, and embarrassed with debt. He had hoped to rise by the favour of the Queen and for the sake of his father. For some ill-explained reason he was to the last disappointed. Though she used him "for matters of state and revenue," she either did not like him, or did not see in him the servant she wanted to advance. He went on to the last

pressing his uncle, Lord Burghley. He applied in the humblest terms, he made himself useful with his pen, he got his mother to write for him; but Lord Burghley, probably because he thought his nephew more of a man of letters than a sound lawyer and practical public servant, did not care to bring him forward. From his cousin, Robert Cecil, Bacon received polite words and friendly assurances. Cecil may have undervalued him, or have been jealous of him, or suspected him as a friend of Essex; he certainly gave Bacon good reason to think that his words meant nothing. Except Essex, and perhaps his brother Antony—the most affectionate and devoted of brothers—no one had yet recognised all that Bacon was. Meanwhile time was passing. The vastness, the difficulties, the attractions of that conquest of all knowledge which he dreamed of, were becoming greater every day to his thoughts. The law, without which he could not live, took up time and brought in little. Attendance on the Court was expensive, yet indispensable, if he wished for place. His mother was never very friendly, and thought him absurd and extravagant. Debts increased and creditors grumbled. The outlook was discouraging, when his friendship with Essex opened to him a more hopeful prospect.

In the year 1593 the Attorney-General's place was vacant, and Essex, who in that year became a Privy Councillor, determined that Bacon should be Attorney-General. Bacon's reputation as a lawyer was overshadowed by his philosophical and literary pursuits. He was thought young for the office, and he had not yet served in any subordinate place. And there was another man, who was supposed to carry all English law in his head, full of rude force and endless precedents, hard of heart and voluble of

tongue, who also wanted it. An Attorney-General was one who would bring all the resources and hidden subtleties of English law to the service of the Crown, and use them with thorough-going and unflinching resolution against those whom the Crown accused of treason, sedition, or invasion of the prerogative. It is no wonder that the Cecils, and the Queen herself, thought Coke likely to be a more useful public servant than Bacon: it is certain what Coke himself thought about it, and what his estimate was of the man whom Essex was pushing against him. But Essex did not take up his friend's cause in the lukewarm fashion in which Burghley had patronised his nephew. There was nothing that Essex pursued with greater pertinacity. He importuned the Queen. He risked without scruple offending her. She apparently long shrank from directly refusing his request. The Cecils were for Coke—the "*Huddler*," as Bacon calls him, in a letter to Essex; but the appointment was delayed. All through 1593, and until April, 1594, the struggle went on.

When Robert Cecil suggested that Essex should be content with the Solicitor's place for Bacon, "praying him to be well advised, for if his Lordship had spoken of that it might have been of easier digestion to the Queen," he turned round on Cecil—

"Digest me no digesting," said the Earl; "for the Attorneyship is that I must have for Francis Bacon; and in that I will spend my uttermost credit, friendship, and authority against whomsoever, and that whosoever went about to procure it to others, that it should cost both the mediators and the suitors the setting on before they came by it. And this be you assured of, Sir Robert," quoth the Earl, "for now do I fully declare myself; and for your own part, Sir Robert, I do think much and strange both of my Lord your father and you, that can have the mind to seek the preferment of a stranger before so near a kinsman; namely, considering if you weigh in a balance

his parts and sufficiency in any respect with those of his competitor, excepting only four poor years of admittance, which Francis Bacon hath more than recompensed with the priority of his reading; in all other respects you shall find no comparison between them."

But the Queen's disgust at some very slight show of independence on Bacon's part in Parliament, unforgiven in spite of repeated apologies, together with the influence of the Cecils and the pressure of so formidable and so useful a man as Coke, turned the scale against Essex. In April, 1594, Coke was made Attorney. Coke did not forget the pretender to law, as he would think him, who had dared so long to dispute his claims; and Bacon was deeply wounded. "No man," he thought, "had ever received a more exquisite disgrace," and he spoke of retiring to Cambridge "to spend the rest of his life in his studies and contemplations." But Essex was not discouraged. He next pressed eagerly for the Solicitorship. Again, after much waiting, he was foiled. An inferior man was put over Bacon's head. Bacon found that Essex, who could do most things, for some reason could not do this. He himself, too, had pressed his suit with the greatest importunity on the Queen, on Burghley, on Cecil, on every one who could help him; he reminded the Queen how many years ago it was since he first kissed her hand in her service, and ever since had used his wits to please; but it was all in vain. For once he lost patience. He was angry with Essex; the Queen's anger with Essex had, he thought, recoiled on his friend. He was angry with the Queen; she held his long waiting cheap; she played with him and amused herself with delay; he would go abroad, and he "knew her Majesty's nature, that she neither careth though the whole surname of the Bacons travelled, nor of the Cecils neither." He

was very angry with Robert Cecil; affecting not to believe them, he tells him stories he has heard of his corrupt and underhand dealing. He writes almost a farewell letter of ceremonious but ambiguous thanks to Lord Burghley, hoping that he would impute any offence that Bacon might have given to the "complexion of a suitor, and a tired sea-sick suitor," and speaking despairingly of his future success in the law. The humiliations of what a suitor has to go through torment him: "It is my luck," he writes to Cecil, "still to be akin to such things as I neither like in nature nor would willingly meet with in my course, but yet cannot avoid without show of base timorousness or else of unkind or suspicious strangeness." And to his friend Fulke Greville he thus unburdens himself:

"SIR,—I understand of your pains to have visited me, for which I thank you. My matter is an endless question. I assure you I had said *Requiesce anima mea*; but I now am otherwise put to my psalter; *Nolite confidere*. I dare go no further. Her Majesty had by set speech more than once assured me of her intention to call me to her service, which I could not understand but of the place I had been named to. And now whether *invidus homo hoc fecit*; or whether my matter must be an appendix to my Lord of Essex suit; or whether her Majesty, pretending to prove my ability, meaneth but to take advantage of some errors which, like enough, at one time or other I may commit; or what is it? but her Majesty is not ready to despatch it. And what though the Master of the Rolls, and my Lord of Essex, and yourself, and others, think my case without doubt, yet in the meantime I have a hard condition, to stand so that whatsoever service I do to her Majesty it shall be thought to be but *servitium viscatum*, lime-twigs and fetches to place myself; and so I shall have envy, not thanks. This is a course to quench all good spirits, and to corrupt every man's nature, which will, I fear, much hurt her Majesty's service in the end. I have been like a piece of stuff bespoken in the shop; and if her Majesty will not take me, it may be the selling by parcels will be more gainful. For to be, as I told you, like a

child following a bird, which when he is nearest flieth away and lighteth a little before, and then the child after it again, and so *in infinitum*, I am weary of it; as also of wearying my good friends, of whom, nevertheless, I hope in one course or other gratefully to deserve. And so, not forgetting your business, I leave to trouble you with this idle letter; being but *justa et moderata querimonia*; for indeed I do confess, *primus amor* will not easily be cast off. And thus again I commend me to you."

After one more effort the chase was given up, at least for the moment; for it was soon resumed. But just now Bacon felt that all the world was against him. He would retire "out of the sunshine into the shade." One friend only encouraged him. He did more. He helped him when Bacon most wanted help, in his straitened and embarrassed "estate." Essex, when he could do nothing more, gave Bacon an estate worth at least £1800. Bacon's resolution is recorded in the following letter:

"IT MAY PLEASE YOUR GOOD LORDSHIP,—I pray God her Majesty's weighing be not like the weight of a balance, *gravia deorum levia sursum*. But I am as far from being altered in devotion towards her, as I am from distrust that she will be altered in opinion towards me, when she knoweth me better. For myself, I have lost some opinion, some time, and some means; this is my account; but then for opinion, it is a blast that goeth and cometh; for time, it is true it goeth and cometh not; but yet I have learned that it may be redeemed. For means, I value that most; and the rather, *because I am purposed not to follow the practice of the law (if her Majesty command me in any particular, I shall be ready to do her willing service)*; and my reason is only, *because it drinketh too much time, which I have dedicated to better purposes*. But even for that point of estate and means, I partly lean to Thales' opinion, That a philosopher may be rich if he will. Thus your Lordship seeth how I comfort myself; to the increase whereof I would fain please myself to believe that to be true which my Lord Treasurer writeth; which is, that it is more than a philosopher morally can disgest. But without any such high conceit, I esteem it like the pulling out of an aching tooth,

which, I remember, when I was a child, and had little philosophy, I was glad of when it was done. For your Lordship, I do think myself more beholding to you than to any man. And I say, I reckon myself as a *common* (not popular but *common*); and as much as is lawful to be enclosed of a common, so much your Lordship shall be sure to have.—Your Lordship's to obey your honourable commands, more settled than ever."

It may be that, as Bacon afterwards maintained, the closing sentences of this letter implied a significant reserve of his devotion. But during the brilliant and stormy years of Essex's career which followed, Bacon's relations to him continued unaltered. Essex pressed Bacon's claims whenever a chance offered. He did his best to get Bacon a rich wife—the young widow of Sir Christopher Hatton—but in vain. Instead of Bacon she accepted Coke, and became famous afterwards in the great family quarrel, in which Coke and Bacon again found themselves face to face, and which nearly ruined Bacon before the time. Bacon worked for Essex when he was wanted, and gave the advice which a shrewd and cautious friend would give to a man who, by his success and increasing pride and self-confidence, was running into serious dangers, arming against himself deadly foes, and exposing himself to the chances of fortune. Bacon was nervous about Essex's capacity for war, a capacity which perhaps was not proved, even by the most brilliant exploit of the time, the capture of Cadiz, in which Essex foreshadowed the heroic but well-calculated audacities of Nelson and Cochrane, and showed himself as little able as they to bear the intoxication of success, and to work in concert with envious and unfriendly associates. At the end of the year 1596, the year in which Essex had won such reputation at Cadiz, Bacon wrote him a letter of advice and remonstrance. It is a

lively picture of the defects and dangers of Essex's behaviour as the Queen's favourite; and it is a most characteristic and worldly-wise summary of the ways which Bacon would have him take, to cure the one and escape the other. Bacon had, as he says, "good reason to think that the Earl's fortune comprehended his own." And the letter may perhaps be taken as an indirect warning to Essex that Bacon must, at any rate, take care of his own fortune, if the Earl persisted in dangerous courses. Bacon shows how he is to remove the impressions, strong in the Queen's mind, of Essex's defects; how he is, by due submissions and stratagems, to catch her humour—

"But whether I counsel you the best, or for the best, duty bindeth me to offer to you my wishes. I said to your Lordship last time, *Martha, Martha, attendis ad plurima, unum sufficit*; win the Queen: if this be not the beginning, of any other course I see no end."

Bacon gives a series of minute directions how Essex is to disarm the Queen's suspicions, and to neutralize the advantage which his rivals take of them; how he is to remove "the opinion of his nature being *opiniastre* and not *rulable*;" how, avoiding the faults of Leicester and Hatton, he is, as far as he can, to "allege them for authors and patterns." Especially, he must give up that show of soldier-like distinction, which the Queen so disliked, and take some quiet post at Court. He must not alarm the Queen by seeking popularity; he must take care of his estate; he must get rid of some of his officers; and he must not be disquieted by other favourites.

Bacon wished, as he said afterwards, to see him "with a white staff in his hand, as my Lord of Leicester had," an honour and ornament to the Court in the eyes of the people and foreign ambassadors. But Essex was not fit for

the part which Bacon urged upon him, that of an obsequious and vigilant observer of the Queen's moods and humours. As time went on, things became more and more difficult between him and his strange mistress; and there were never wanting men who, like Cecil and Raleigh, for good and bad reasons, feared and hated Essex, and who had the craft and the skill to make the most of his inexcusable errors. At last he allowed himself, from ambition, from the spirit of contradiction, from the blind passion for doing what he thought would show defiance to his enemies, to be tempted into the Irish campaign of 1599. Bacon at a later time claimed credit for having foreseen and foretold its issue. "I did as plainly see his overthrow, chained as it were by destiny to that journey, as it is possible for any man to ground a judgment on future contingents." He warned Essex, so he thought in after years, of the difficulty of the work; he warned him that he would leave the Queen in the hands of his enemies: "It would be ill for her, ill for him, ill for the State." "I am sure," he adds, "I never in anything in my life dealt with him in like earnestness by speech, by writing, and by all the means I could devise." But Bacon's memory was mistaken. We have his letters. When Essex went to Ireland, Bacon wrote only in the language of sanguine hope—so little did he see "overthrow chained by destiny to that journey," that "some good spirit led his pen to presage to his Lordship success;" he saw in the enterprise a great occasion of honour to his friend; he gave prudent counsels, but he looked forward confidently to Essex being as "fatal a captain to that war, as Africanus was to the war of Carthage." Indeed, however anxious he may have been, he could not have foreseen Essex's unaccountable and to this day unintelligible failure. But failure was the

end, from whatever cause; failure, disgraceful and complete. Then followed wild and guilty but abortive projects for retrieving his failure, by using his power in Ireland to make himself formidable to his enemies at Court, and even to the Queen herself. He intrigued with Tyrone; he intrigued with James of Scotland; he plunged into a whirl of angry and baseless projects, which came to nothing the moment they were discussed. How empty and idle they were was shown by his return against orders to tell his own story at Nonsuch, and by thus placing himself alone and undeniably in the wrong, in the power of the hostile Council. Of course it was not to be thought of that Cecil should not use his advantage in the game. It was too early, irritated though the Queen was, to strike the final blow. But it is impossible not to see, looking back over the miserable history, that Essex was treated in a way which was certain, sooner or later, to make him, being what he was, plunge into a fatal and irretrievable mistake. He was treated as a cat treats a mouse; he was worried, confined, disgraced, publicly reprimanded, brought just within verge of the charge of treason, but not quite, just enough to discredit and alarm him, but to leave him still a certain amount of play. He was made to see that the Queen's favour was not quite hopeless; but that nothing but the most absolute and unreserved humiliation could recover it. It was plain to any one who knew Essex that this treatment would drive Essex to madness. "These same gradations of yours"—so Bacon represents himself expostulating with the Queen on her caprices—"are fitter to corrupt than to correct any mind of greatness." They made Essex desperate; he became frightened for his life, and he had reason to be so, though not in the way which he feared. At length came the stupid and ridiculous out-

break of the 8th of February, 1601, a plot to seize the palace and raise the city against the ministers, by the help of a few gentlemen armed only with their rapiers. As Bacon himself told the Queen, "if some base and cruel-minded persons had entered into such an action, it might have caused much blow and combustion; but it appeared well that they were such as knew not how to play the malefactors!" But it was sufficient to bring Essex within the doom of treason.

Essex knew well what the stake was. He lost it, and deserved to lose it, little as his enemies deserved to win it; for they, too, were doing what would have cost them their heads if Elizabeth had known it—corresponding, as Essex was accused of doing, with Scotland about the succession, and possibly with Spain. But they were playing cautiously and craftily; he with bungling passion. He had been so long accustomed to power and place, that he could not endure that rivals should keep him out of it. They were content to have their own way, while affecting to be the humblest of servants; he would be nothing less than a Mayor of the Palace. He was guilty of a great public crime, as every man is who appeals to arms for anything short of the most sacred cause. He was bringing into England, which had settled down into peaceable ways, an imitation of the violent methods of France and the Guises. But the crime as well as the penalty belonged to the age, and crimes legally said to be against the State mean morally very different things, according to the state of society and opinion. It is an unfairness verging on the ridiculous, when the ground is elaborately laid for keeping up the impression that Essex was preparing a real treason against the Queen like that of Norfolk. It was a treason of the same sort and order as that for which Northumberland sent Som-

erset to the block: the treason of being an unsuccessful rival.

Meanwhile Bacon had been getting gradually into the unofficial employ of the Government. He had become one of the "Learned Counsel"—lawyers with subordinate and intermittent work, used when wanted, but without patent or salary, and not ranking with the regular law officers. The Government had found him useful in affairs of the revenue, in framing interrogatories for prisoners in the Tower, in drawing up reports of plots against the Queen. He did not in this way earn enough to support himself; but he had thus come to have some degree of access to the Queen, which he represents as being familiar and confidential, though he still perceived, as he says himself, that she did not like him. At the first news of Essex's return to England, Bacon greeted him—

"MY LORD,—Conceiving that your Lordship came now up in the person of a good servant to see your sovereign mistress, which kind of compliments are many times *instar magnorum meritorum*, and therefore it would be hard for me to find you, I have committed to this poor paper the humble salutations of him *that is more yours than any man's, and more yours than any man*. To these salutations I add a due and joyful gratulation, confessing that your Lordship, in your last conference with me before your journey, spake not in vain, God making it good, That you trusted we should say *Quis putasset!* Which as it is found true in a happy sense, so I wish you do not find another *Quis putasset* in the manner of taking this so great a service. But I hope it is, as he said, *Nubecula est, cito transibit*, and that your Lordship's wisdom and obsequious circumspection and patience will turn all to the best. So referring all to some time that I may attend you, I commit you to God's best preservation."

But when Essex's conduct in Ireland had to be dealt with, Bacon's services were called for; and from this time his relations towards Essex were altered. Every one, no

one better than the Queen herself, knew all that he owed to Essex. It is strangely illustrative of the time, that especially as Bacon held so subordinate a position, he should have been required, and should have been trusted, to act against his only and most generous benefactor. It is strange, too, that however great his loyalty to the Queen, however much and sincerely he might condemn his friend's conduct, he should think it possible to accept the task. He says that he made some remonstrance; and he says, no doubt truly, that during the first stage of the business he used the ambiguous position in which he was placed to soften Essex's inevitable punishment, and to bring about a reconciliation between him and the Queen. But he was required, as the Queen's lawyer, to set forth in public Essex's offences; and he admits that he did so "not over tenderly." Yet all this, even if we have misgivings about it, is intelligible. If he had declined, he could not, perhaps, have done the service which he assures us that he tried to do for Essex; and it is certain that he would have had to reckon with the terrible lady who in her old age still ruled England from the throne of Henry VIII., and who had certainly no great love for Bacon himself. She had already shown him in a much smaller matter what was the forfeit to be paid for any resistance to her will. All the hopes of his life must perish; all the grudging and suspicious favours which he had won with such unremitting toil and patient waiting would be sacrificed, and he would henceforth live under the wrath of those who never forgave. And whatever he did for himself, he believed that he was serving Essex. His scheming imagination and his indefatigable pen were at work. He tried strange indirect methods; he invented a correspondence between his brother and Essex, which was to fall into the Queen's hands in order to soften her

wrath and show her Essex's most secret feelings. When the Queen proposed to dine with him at his lodge in Twickenham Park, "though I profess not to be a poet," he "prepared a sonnet tending and alluding to draw on her Majesty's reconciliation to my Lord." It was an awkward thing for one who had been so intimate with Essex to be so deep in the counsels of those who hated him. He complains that many people thought him ungrateful and disloyal to his friend, and that stories circulated to his disadvantage, as if he were poisoning the Queen's ear against Essex. But he might argue fairly enough that, wilful and wrong-headed as Essex had been, it was the best that he could now do for him; and as long as it was only a question of Essex's disgrace and enforced absence from Court, Bacon could not be bound to give up the prospects of his life—indeed, his public duty as a subordinate servant of government—on account of his friend's inexcusable and dangerous follies. Essex did not see it so, and in the subjoined correspondence had the advantage; but Bacon's position, though a higher one might be imagined, where men had been such friends as these two men had been, is quite a defensible one:

"MY LORD,—No man can better expound my doings than your Lordship, which maketh me need to say the less. Only I humbly pray you to believe that I aspire to the conscience and commendation first of *bonus civis*, which with us is a good and true servant to the Queen, and next of *bonus vir*, that is an honest man. I desire your Lordship also to think that though I confess I love some things much better than I love your Lordship—as the Queen's service, her quiet and contentment, her honour, her favour, the good of my country, and the like—yet I love few persons better than yourself, both for gratitude's sake and for your own virtues, which cannot hurt but by accident or abuse. Of which my good affection I was ever ready and am ready to yield testimony by any good offices, but with such reservations as

yourself cannot but allow; for as I was ever sorry that your Lordship should fly with waxen wings, doubting Icarus's fortune, so for the growing up of your own feathers, specially ostrich's, or any other save of a bird of prey, no man shall be more glad. And this is the axle-tree whereupon I have turned and shall turn, which to signify to you, though I think you are of yourself persuaded as much, is the cause of my writing; and so I commend your Lordship to God's goodness. From Gray's Inn, this 20th day of July, 1600.

"Your Lordship's most humbly,

"FR. BACON."

To this letter Essex returned an answer of dignified reserve, such as Bacon might himself have dictated—

"MR. BACON,—I can neither expound nor censure your late actions, being ignorant of all of them, save one, and having directed my sight inward only, to examine myself. You do pray me to believe that you only aspire to the conscience and commendation of *bonus civis* and *bonus vir*; and I do faithfully assure you, that while that is your ambition (though your course be active and mine contemplative), yet we shall both *convenire in eodem tertio* and *convenire inter nos ipsos*. Your profession of affection and offer of good offices are welcome to me. For answer to them I will say but this, that you have believed I have been kind to you, and you may believe that I cannot be other, either upon humour or my own election. I am a stranger to all poetical conceits, or else I should say somewhat of your poetical example. But this I must say, that I never flew with other wings than desire to merit and confidence in my Sovereign's favour; and when one of these wings failed me I would light nowhere but at my Sovereign's feet, though she suffered me to be bruised with my fall. And till her Majesty, that knows I was never bird of prey, finds it to agree with her will and her service that my wings should be impied again, I have committed myself to the mire. No power but my God's and my Sovereign's can alter this resolution of

"Your retired friend,

"ESSEX."

But after Essex's mad attempt in the city a new state of things arose. The inevitable result was a trial for high treason, a trial of which no one could doubt the purpose

and end. The examination of accomplices revealed speeches, proposals, projects, not very intelligible to us in the still imperfectly understood game of intrigue that was going on among all parties at the end of Elizabeth's reign, but quite enough to place Essex at the mercy of the Government and the offended Queen. "The new information," says Mr. Spedding, "had been immediately communicated to Coke and Bacon." Coke, as Attorney-General, of course conducted the prosecution; and the next prominent person on the side of the Crown was not the Solicitor, or any other regular law officer, but Bacon, though holding the very subordinate place of one of the "Learned Counsel."

It does not appear that he thought it strange, that he showed any pain or reluctance, that he sought to be excused. He took it as a matter of course. The part assigned to Bacon in the prosecution was as important as that of Coke; and he played it more skilfully and effectively. Trials in those days were confused affairs, often passing into a mere wrangle between the judges, lawyers, and lookers-on, and the prisoner at the bar. It was so in this case. Coke is said to have blundered in his way of presenting the evidence, and to have been led away from the point into an altercation with Essex. Probably it really did not much matter; but the trial was getting out of its course and inclining in favour of the prisoner, till Bacon—Mr. Spedding thinks, out of his regular turn—stepped forward and retrieved matters. This is Mr. Spedding's account of what Bacon said and did:

"By this time the argument had drifted so far away from the point that it must have been difficult for a listener to remember what it was that the prisoners were charged with, or how much of the charge had been proved. And Coke, who was all this time the sole speaker on behalf of the Crown, was still following each fresh topic

that rose before him, without the sign of an intention or the intimation of a wish to return to the main question and reform the broken ranks of his evidence. Luckily he seems to have been now at a loss what point to take next, and the pause gave Bacon an opportunity of rising. It can hardly have been in pursuance of previous arrangements; for though it was customary in those days to distribute the evidence into parts and to assign several parts to several counsel, there had been no appearance as yet of any part being concluded. It is probable that the course of the trial had upset previous arrangements and confused the parts. At any rate so it was, however it came to pass, that when Cecil and Essex had at last finished their expostulation and parted with charitable prayers, each that the other might be forgiven, then (says our reporter) Mr. Bacon entered into a speech much after this fashion:

“In speaking of this late and horrible rebellion which hath been in the eyes and ears of all men, I shall save myself much labour in opening and enforcing the points thereof, inasmuch as I speak not before a country jury of ignorant men, but before a most honourable assembly of the greatest Peers of the land, whose wisdoms conceive far more than my tongue can utter; yet with your gracious and honourable favours I will presume, if not for information of your Honours, yet for the discharge of my duty, to say thus much. No man can be ignorant, that knows matters of former ages—and all history makes it plain—that there was never any traitor heard of that durst directly attempt the seat of his liege prince but he always coloured his practices with some plausible pretence. For God hath imprinted such a majesty in the face of a prince that no private man dare approach the person of his sovereign with a traitorous intent. And therefore they run another side course, *oblique et à latere*: some to reform corruptions of the State and religion; some to reduce the ancient liberties and customs pretended to be lost and worn out; some to remove those persons that being in high places make themselves subject to envy; but all of them aim at the overthrow of the State and destruction of the present rulers. And this likewise is the use of those that work mischief of another quality; as Cain, that first murderer, took up an excuse for his fact, shaming to out-face it with impudency, thus the Earl made his colour the severing some great men and councillors from her Majesty's favour, and the fear he stood in of his pretended enemies lest they should murder

him in his house. Therefore he saith he was compelled to fly into the City for succour and assistance; not much unlike Pisistratus, of whom it was so anciently written how he gashed and wounded himself, and in that sort ran crying into Athens that his life was sought and like to have been taken away; thinking to have moved the people to have pitied him and taken his part by such counterfeited harm and danger; whereas his aim and drift was to take the government of the city into his hands and alter the form thereof. With like pretences of dangers and assaults the Earl of Essex entered the City of London and passed through the bowels thereof, blanching rumours that he should have been murdered and that the State was sold; whereas he had no such enemies, no such dangers: persuading themselves that if they could prevail all would have done well. But now *magna scelera terminantur in hæresin*; for you, my Lord, should know that though princes give their subjects cause of discontent, though they take away the honours they have heaped upon them, though they bring them to a lower estate than they raised them from, yet ought they not to be so forgetful of their allegiance that they should enter into any undutiful act; much less upon rebellion, as you, my Lord, have done. All whatsoever you have or can say in answer hereof are but shadows. And therefore methinks it were best for you to confess, not to justify.’”

Essex was provoked by Bacon’s incredulous sneer about enemies and dangers—“I call forth Mr. Bacon against Mr. Bacon,” and referred to the letters which Bacon had written in his name, and in which these dangerous enmities were taken for granted. Bacon, in answer, repeated what he said so often—“That he had spent more time in vain in studying how to make the Earl a good servant to the Queen and State than he had done in anything else.” Once more Coke got the proceedings into a tangle, and once more Bacon came forward to repair the miscarriage of his leader.

“‘I have never yet seen in any case such favour shown to any prisoner; so many digressions, such delivering of evidence by fractions, and so silly a defence of such great and notorious treasons. May it

please your Grace, you have seen how weakly he hath shadowed his purpose and how slenderly he hath answered the objections against him. But, my Lord, I doubt the variety of matters and the many digressions may minister occasion of forgetfulness, and may have severed the judgments of the Lords; and therefore I hold it necessary briefly to recite the Judges' opinions.'

"That being done, he proceeded to this effect:

"'Now put the case that the Earl of Essex's intents were, as he would have it believed, to go only as a suppliant to her Majesty. Shall their petitions be presented by armed petitioners? This must needs bring loss of property to the prince. Neither is it any point of law, as my Lord of Southampton would have it believed, that condemns them of treason. To take secret counsel, to execute it, to run together in numbers armed with weapons—what can be the excuse? Warned by the Lord Keeper, by a herald, and yet persist! Will any simple man take this to be less than treason?'

"The Earl of Essex answered that if he had purposed anything against others than those his private enemies, he would not have stirred with so slender a company. Whereunto Mr. Bacon answered:

"'It was not the company you carried with you but the assistance you hoped for in the City which you trusted unto. The Duke of Guise thrust himself into the streets of Paris on the day of the Barri-cados in his doublet and hose, attended only with eight gentlemen, and found that help in the city which (thanks be to God) you failed of here. And what followed? The King was forced to put himself into a pilgrim's weeds, and in that disguise to steal away to scape their fury. Even such was my Lord's confidence too, and his pretence the same—an all-hail and a kiss to the City. But the end was treason, as hath been sufficiently proved. But when he had once delivered and engaged himself so far into that which the shallowness of his conceit could not accomplish as he expected, the Queen for her defence taking arms against him, he was glad to yield himself; and thinking to colour his practices, turned his pretexts, and alleged the occasion thereof to proceed from a private quarrel.'

"To this" (adds the reporter) "the Earl answered little. Nor was anything said afterwards by either of the prisoners, either in the thrust-and-parry dialogue with Coke that followed, or when they spoke at large to the question why judgment should not be pro-

nounced, which at all altered the complexion of the case. They were both found guilty and sentence passed in the usual form."

Bacon's legal position was so subordinate a place that there must have been a special reason for his employment. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, on the part of the Government, Bacon was thus used for the very reason that he had been the friend of Essex. He was not commonly called upon in such prosecutions. He was not employed by Cecil in the Winchester trials of Raleigh, Grey, and Cobham, three years afterwards, nor in those connected with the Gunpowder Plot. He was called upon now because no one could so much damage Essex; and this last proof of his ready service was required by those whose favour, since Essex had gone hopelessly wrong, he had been diligently seeking. And Bacon acquiesced in the demand, apparently without surprise. No record remains to show that he felt any difficulty in playing his part. He had persuaded himself that his public duty, his duty as a good citizen to the Queen and the commonwealth, demanded of him that he should obey the call to do his best to bring a traitor to punishment.

Public duty has claims on a man as well as friendship, and in many conceivable cases claims paramount to those of friendship. And yet friendship, too, has claims, at least on a man's memory. Essex had been a dear friend, if words could mean anything. He had done more than any man had done for Bacon, generously and nobly, and Bacon had acknowledged it in the amplest terms. Only a year before he had written, "I am as much yours as any man's, and as much yours as any man." It is not, and it was not, a question of Essex's guilt. It may be a question whether the whole matter was not exaggerated as to its purpose, as it certainly was as to its real danger and

mischief. We at least know that his rivals dabbled in intrigue and foolish speeches as well as he; that little more than two years afterwards Raleigh and Grey and Cobham were condemned for treason in much the same fashion as he was; that Cecil to the end of his days—with whatever purpose—was a pensioner of Spain. The question was not whether Essex was guilty. The question for Bacon was, whether it was becoming in him, having been what he had been to Essex, to take a leading part in proceedings which were to end in his ruin and death. He was not a judge. He was not a regular law officer like Coke. His only employment had been casual and occasional. He might, most naturally, on the score of his old friendship, have asked to be excused. Condemning, as he did, his friend's guilt and folly, he might have refused to take part in a cause of blood, in which his best friend must perish. He might honestly have given up Essex as incorrigible, and have retired to stand apart in sorrow and silence while the inevitable tragedy was played out. The only answer to this is, that to have declined would have incurred the Queen's displeasure: he would have forfeited any chance of advancement; nay, closely connected as he had been with Essex, he might have been involved in his friend's ruin. But inferior men have marred their fortunes by standing by their friends in not undeserved trouble, and no one knew better than Bacon what was worthy and noble in human action. The choice lay before him. He seems hardly to have gone through any struggle. He persuaded himself that he could not help himself, under the constraint of his duty to the Queen, and he did his best to get Essex condemned.

And this was not all. The death of Essex was a shock to the popularity of Elizabeth greater than anything that

had happened in her long reign. Bacon's name also had come into men's mouths as that of a time-server who played fast and loose with Essex and his enemies, and who, when he had got what he could from Essex, turned to see what he could get from those who put him to death. A justification of the whole affair was felt to be necessary; and Bacon was fixed upon for the distinction and the dishonour of doing it. No one could tell the story so well, and it was felt that he would not shrink from it. Nor did he. In cold blood he sat down to blacken Essex, using his intimate personal knowledge of the past to strengthen his statements against a friend who was in his grave, and for whom none could answer but Bacon himself. It is a well-compacted and forcible account of Essex's misdoings, on which of course the colour of deliberate and dangerous treason was placed. Much of it, no doubt, was true; but even of the facts, and much more of the colour, there was no check to be had, and it is certain that it was an object to the Government to make out the worst. It is characteristic that Bacon records that he did not lose sight of the claims of courtesy, and studiously spoke of "my Lord of Essex" in the draft submitted for correction to the Queen; but she was more unceremonious, and insisted that the "rebel" should be spoken of simply as "Essex."

After a business of this kind, fines and forfeitures flowed in abundantly, and were "usually bestowed on deserving servants or favoured suitors by way of reward;" and Bacon came in for his share. Out of one of the fines he received £1200. "The Queen hath done something for me," he writes to a friendly creditor, "though not in the proportion I had hoped," and he afterwards asked for something more. It was rather under the value of Essex's gift to him in 1564. But she still refused him

all promotion. He was without an official place in the Queen's service, and he never was allowed to have it. It is clear that the "Declaration of the Treason of the Earl of Essex," if it justified the Government, did not remove the odium which had fallen on Bacon. Mr. Spedding says that he can find no signs of it. The proof of it is found in the "Apology" which Bacon found it expedient to write after Elizabeth's death and early in James's reign. He found that the recollection of the way in which he had dealt with his friend hung heavy upon him; men hesitated to trust him in spite of his now recognised ability. Accordingly, he drew up an apology, which he addressed to Lord Mountjoy, the friend, in reality half the accomplice, of Essex, in his wild, ill-defined plan for putting pressure on Elizabeth. It is a clear, able, of course *ex parte* statement of the doings of the three chief actors, two of whom could no longer answer for themselves, or correct and contradict the third. It represents the Queen as implacable and cruel, Essex as incorrigibly and outrageously wilful, proud, and undutiful, Bacon himself as using every effort and device to appease the Queen's anger and suspiciousness, and to bring Essex to a wiser and humbler mind. The picture is indeed a vivid one, and full of dramatic force, of an unrelenting and merciless mistress bent on breaking and bowing down to the dust the haughty spirit of a once-loved but rebellious favourite, whom, though he has deeply offended, she yet wishes to bring once more under her yoke; and of the calm, keen-witted looker-on, watching the dangerous game, not without personal interest, but with undisturbed presence of mind, and doing his best to avert an irreparable and fatal breach. How far he honestly did his best for his misguided friend we can only know from his own report;

but there is no reason to think that he did Essex ill service, though he notices in passing an allegation that the Queen in one of her angry fits had charged him with this. But his interest clearly was to make up the quarrel between the Queen and Essex. Bacon would have been a greater man with both of them if he had been able to do so. He had been too deeply in Essex's intimacy to make his new position of mediator, with a strong bias on the Queen's side, quite safe and easy for a man of honourable mind; but a cool-judging and prudent man may well have acted as he represents himself acting without forgetting what he owed to his friend. Till the last great moment of trial there is a good deal to be said for Bacon: a man keenly alive to Essex's faults, with a strong sense of what he owed to the Queen and the State, and with his own reasonable chances of rising greatly prejudiced by Essex's folly. But at length came the crisis which showed the man, and threw light on all that had passed before, when he was picked out, out of his regular place, to be charged with the task of bringing home the capital charge against Essex. He does not say he hesitated. He does not say that he asked to be excused the terrible office. He did not flinch as the minister of vengeance for those who required that Essex should die. He did his work, we are told by his admiring biographer, better than Coke, and repaired the blunders of the prosecution. He passes over very shortly this part of the business: "It was laid upon me with the rest of my fellows;" yet it is the knot and key of the whole, as far as his own character is concerned. Bacon had his public duty: his public duty may have compelled him to stand apart from Essex. But it was his interest, it was no part of his public duty, which required him to accept the task of accuser of his friend,

and in his friend's direst need calmly to drive home a well-directed stroke that should extinguish chances and hopes, and make his ruin certain. No one who reads his anxious letters about preferment and the Queen's favour, about his disappointed hopes, about his straitened means and distress for money, about his difficulties with his creditors—he was twice arrested for debt—can doubt that the question was between his own prospects and his friend; and that to his own interest he sacrificed his friend and his own honour.

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CHAPTER III.

BACON AND JAMES I.

BACON's life was a double one. There was the life of high thinking, of disinterested aims, of genuine enthusiasm, of genuine desire to delight and benefit mankind, by opening new paths to wonder and knowledge and power. And there was the put on and worldly life, the life of supposed necessities for the provision of daily bread, the life of ambition and self-seeking, which he followed, not without interest and satisfaction, but at bottom because he thought he must—must be a great man, must be rich, must live in the favour of the great, because without it his great designs could not be accomplished. His original plan of life was disclosed in his letter to Lord Burghley: to get some office with an assured income and not much work, and then to devote the best of his time to his own subjects. But this, if it was really his plan, was gradually changed: first, because he could not get such a place; and next because his connection with Essex, the efforts to gain him the Attorney's place, and the use which the Queen made of him after Essex could do no more for him, drew him more and more into public work, and specially the career of the law. We know that he would not by preference have chosen the law, and did not feel that his vocation lay that way; but it was the only way open to him for

mending his fortunes. And so the two lives went on side by side, the worldly one—he would have said, the practical one—often interfering with the life of thought and discovery, and partly obscuring it, but yet always leaving it paramount in his own mind. His dearest and most cherished ideas, the thoughts with which he was most at home and happiest, his deepest and truest ambitions, were those of an enthusiastic and romantic believer in a great discovery just within his grasp. They were such as the dreams and visions of his great Franciscan namesake, and of the imaginative seekers after knowledge in the middle ages, real or mythical, Albert the Great, Cornelius Agrippa, Dr. Faustus; they were the eager, undoubting hopes of the physical students in Italy and England in his own time, Giordano Bruno, Telesio, Campanella, Gilbert, Galileo, or the founders of the Italian prototype of "Solomon's House" in the *New Atlantis*, the precursor of our Royal Societies, the Academy of the *Lincei* at Rome. Among these meditations was his inner life. But however he may have originally planned his course, and though at times under the influence of disappointment he threatened to retire to Cambridge or to travel abroad, he had bound himself fast to public life, and soon ceased to think of quitting it. And he had a real taste for it—for its shows, its prizes, for the laws and turns of the game, for its debates and vicissitudes. He was no mere idealist or recluse to undervalue or despise the real grandeur of the world. He took the keenest interest in the nature and ways of mankind; he liked to observe, to generalise in shrewd and sometimes cynical epigrams. He liked to apply his powerful and fertile intellect to the practical problems of society and government, to their curious anomalies, to their paradoxical phenomena; he liked to address himself, either

as an expounder or a reformer, to the principles and entanglements of English law; he aspired, both as a lecturer and a legislator, to improve and simplify it. It was not beyond his hopes to shape a policy, to improve administration, to become powerful by bringing his sagacity and largeness of thought to the service of the State, in reconciling conflicting forces, in mediating between jealous parties and dangerous claims. And he liked to enter into the humours of a Court; to devote his brilliant imagination and affluence of invention either to devising a pageant which should throw all others into the shade, or a compromise which should get great persons out of some difficulty of temper or pique.

In all these things he was as industrious, as laborious, as calmly persevering and tenacious, as he was in his pursuit of his philosophical speculations. He was a compound of the most adventurous and most diversified ambition, with a placid and patient temper, such as we commonly associate with moderate desires and the love of retirement and an easy life. To imagine and dare anything, and never to let go the object of his pursuit, is one side of him; on the other he is obsequiously desirous to please and fearful of giving offence, the humblest and most grateful and also the most importunate of suitors, ready to bide his time with an even cheerfulness of spirit, which yet it was not safe to provoke by ill offices and the wish to thwart him. He never misses a chance of proffering his services; he never lets pass an opportunity of recommending himself to those who could help him. He is so bent on natural knowledge that we have a sense of incongruity when we see him engaging in politics as if he had no other interest. He throws himself with such zest into the language of the moralist, the theologian, the historian, that we forget we

have before us the author of a new departure in physical inquiry, and the unwearied compiler of tables of natural history. When he is a lawyer, he seems only a lawyer. If he had not been the author of the *Instauratio*, his life would not have looked very different from that of any other of the shrewd and supple lawyers who hung on to the Tudor and Stuart Courts, and who unscrupulously pushed their way to preferment. He claimed to be, in spite of the misgivings of Elizabeth and her ministers, as devoted to public work and as capable of it as any of them. He was ready for anything, for any amount of business, ready, as in everything, to take infinite trouble about it. The law, if he did not like it, was yet no by-work with him; he was as truly ambitious as the men with whom he maintained so keen and for long so unsuccessful a rivalry. He felt bitterly the disappointment of seeing men like Coke and Fleming and Doddridge and Hobart pass before him; he could not, if he had been only a lawyer, have coveted more eagerly the places, refused to him, which they got; only, he had besides a whole train of purposes, an inner and supreme ambition, of which they knew nothing. And with all this there is no apparent consciousness of these manifold and varied interests. He never affected to conceal from himself his superiority to other men in his aims and in the grasp of his intelligence. But there is no trace that he prided himself on the variety and versatility of these powers, or that he even distinctly realized to himself that it was anything remarkable that he should have so many dissimilar objects and be able so readily to pursue them in such different directions.

It is doubtful whether, as long as Elizabeth lived, Bacon could ever have risen above his position among the "Learned Counsel," an office without patent or salary or

regular employment. She used him, and he was willing to be used; but he plainly did not appear in her eyes to be the kind of man who would suit her in the more prominent posts of her Government. Unusual and original ability is apt, till it is generally recognised, to carry with it suspicion and mistrust as to its being really all that it seems to be. Perhaps she thought of the possibility of his flying out unexpectedly at some inconvenient pinch, and attempting to serve her interests, not in her way, but in his own; perhaps she distrusted in business and state affairs so brilliant a discourser, whose heart was known, first and above all, to be set on great dreams of knowledge; perhaps those interviews with her in which he describes the counsels which he laid before her, and in which his shrewdness and foresight are conspicuous, may not have been so welcome to her as he imagined; perhaps, it is not impossible, that he may have been too compliant for her capricious taste, and too visibly anxious to please. Perhaps, too, she could not forget, in spite of what had happened, that he had been the friend, and not the very generous friend, of Essex. But, except as to a share of the forfeitures, with which he was not satisfied, his fortunes did not rise under Elizabeth.

Whatever may have been the Queen's feelings towards him, there is no doubt that one powerful influence, which lasted into the reign of James, was steadily adverse to his advancement. Burghley had been strangely niggardly in what he did to help his brilliant nephew; he was going off the scene, and probably did not care to trouble himself about a younger and uncongenial aspirant to service. But his place was taken by his son, Robert Cecil; and Cecil might naturally have been expected to welcome the co-operation of one of his own family who

was foremost among the rising men of Cecil's own generation, and who certainly was most desirous to do him service. But it is plain that he early made up his mind to keep Bacon in the background. It is easy to imagine reasons, though the apparent short-sightedness of the policy may surprise us; but Cecil was too reticent and self-controlled a man to let his reasons appear, and his words, in answer to his cousin's applications for his assistance, were always kind, encouraging, and vague. But we must judge by the event, and that makes it clear that Cecil did not care to see Bacon in high position. Nothing can account for Bacon's strange failure for so long a time to reach his due place in the public service but the secret hostility, whatever may have been the cause, of Cecil.

There was also another difficulty. Coke was the great lawyer of the day, a man whom the Government could not dispense with, and whom it was dangerous to offend. And Coke thoroughly disliked Bacon. He thought lightly of his law, and he despised his refinement and his passion for knowledge. He cannot but have resented the impertinence, as he must have thought it, of Bacon having been for a whole year his rival for office. It is possible that if people then agreed with Mr. Spedding's opinion as to the management of Essex's trial, he may have been irritated by jealousy; but a couple of months after the trial (April 29, 1601) Bacon sent to Cecil, with a letter of complaint, the following account of a scene in Court between Coke and himself:

"A true remembrance of the abuse I received of Mr. Attorney-General publicly in the Exchequer the first day of term; for the truth whereof I refer myself to all that were present.

"I moved to have a reseizure of the lands of Geo. Moore, a relapsed recusant, a fugitive and a practising traitor; and showed bet-

ter matter for the Queen against the discharge by plea, which is ever with a *salvo jure*. And this I did in as gentle and reasonable terms as might be.

"Mr. Attorney kindled at it, and said, '*Mr. Bacon, if you have any tooth against me pluck it out, for it will do you more hurt than all the teeth in your head will do you good.*' I answered coldly in these very words: '*Mr. Attorney, I respect you; I fear you not; and the less you speak of your own greatness, the more I will think of it.*'

"He replied, '*I think scorn to stand upon terms of greatness towards you, who are less than little; less than the least;*' and other such strange light terms he gave me, with that insulting which cannot be expressed.

"Herewith stirred, yet I said no more but this: '*Mr. Attorney, do not depress me so far; for I have been your better, and may be again, when it please the Queen.*'

"With this he spake, neither I nor himself could tell what, as if he had been born Attorney-General; and in the end bade me not meddle with the Queen's business, but with mine own; and that I was unsworn, etc. I told him, sworn or unsworn was all one to an honest man; and that I ever set my service first, and myself second; and wished to God that he would do the like.

"Then he said, it were good to clap a *cap. ultegatum* upon my back! To which I only said he could not; and that he was at fault, for he hunted upon an old scent. He gave me a number of disgraceful words besides, which I answered with silence, and showing that I was not moved with them."

The threat of the *capias ultegatum* was probably in reference to the arrest of Bacon for debt in September, 1593. After this we are not surprised at Bacon writing to Coke, "who take to yourself a liberty to disgrace and disable my law, my experience, my discretion," that, "since I missed the Solicitor's place (the rather I think by your means) I cannot expect that you and I shall ever serve as Attorney and Solicitor together, but either serve with another on your remove, or step into some other course." And Coke, no doubt, took care that it should

be so. Cecil, too, may possibly have thought that Bacon gave no proof of his fitness for affairs in thus bringing before him a squabble in which both parties lost their tempers.

Bacon was not behind the rest of the world in "the posting of men of good quality towards the King," in the rush which followed the Queen's death, of those who were eager to proffer their services to James, for whose peaceful accession Cecil had so skilfu'ly prepared the way. He wrote to every one who, he thought, could help him: to Cecil, and to Cecil's man—"I pray you, as you find time let him know that he is the personage in the State which I love most;" to Northumberland, "If I may be of any use to your Lordship, by my head, tongue, pen, means, or friends, I humbly pray you to hold me your own;" to the King's Scotch friends and servants, even to Southampton, the friend of Essex, who had been shut up in the Tower since his condemnation with Essex, and who was now released. "This great change," Bacon assured him, "hath wrought in me no other change towards your Lordship than this, that I may safely be now that which I truly was before." Bacon found in after years that Southampton was not so easily conciliated. But at present Bacon was hopeful: "In mine own particular," he writes, "I have many comforts and assurances; but in mine own opinion the chief is, that the *canvassing world is gone, and the deserving world is come.*" He asks to be recommended to the King—"I commend myself to your love and to the well-using of my name, as well in repressing and answering for me, if there be any biting or nibbling at it in that place, as in impressing a good conceit and opinion of me, chiefly in the King, as otherwise in that Court." His pen had been used under the government of the

Queen, and he had offered a draft of a proclamation to the King's advisers. But though he obtained an interview with the King, James's arrival in England brought no immediate prospect of improvement in Bacon's fortunes. Indeed, his name was at first inadvertently passed over in the list of Queen's servants who were to retain their places. The first thing we hear of is his arrest a second time for debt; and his letters of thanks to Cecil, who had rendered him assistance, are written in deep depression.

"For my purpose or course I desire to meddle as little as I can in the King's causes, his Majesty now abounding in counsel, and to follow my private thrift and practice, and to marry with some convenient advancement. For as for any ambition, I do assure your Honour, mine is quenched. In the Queen's, my excellent Mistress's, time the *quorum* was small: her service was a kind of freehold, and it was a more solemn time. All those points agreed with my nature and judgment. My ambition now I shall only put upon my pen, whereby I shall be able to maintain memory and merit of the times succeeding.

"Lastly, for this divulged and almost prostituted title of knighthood, I could without charge, by your Honour's mean, be content to have it, both because of this late disgrace and because I have three new knights in my mess in Gray's Inn's commons; and because I have found out an alderman's daughter, an handsome maiden, to my liking."

Cecil, however, seems to have required that the money should be repaid by the day; and Bacon only makes a humble request, which, it might be supposed, could have been easily granted.

"IT MAY PLEASE YOUR GOOD LORDSHIP,—In answer of your last letter, your money shall be *ready* before your day: principal, interest, and costs of suit. So the sheriff promised, when I released errors; and a Jew takes no more. The rest cannot be forgotten, for I cannot forget your Lordship's *dum memor ipse mei*; and if there have

been *aliquid nimis*, it shall be amended. And, to be plain with your Lordship, that will quicken me now which slackened me before. Then I thought you might have had more use of me than now I suppose you are like to have. Not but I think the impediment will be rather in my mind than in the matter or times. But to do you service I will come out of my religion at any time.

"For my knighthood, I wish the manner might be such as might grace me, since the matter will not; I mean, that I might not be merely gregarious in a troop. The coronation is at hand. It may please your Lordship to let me hear from you speedily. So I continue your Lordship's ever much bounden,

FR. BACON.

"From Gorhambury, this 16th of July, 1603."

But it was not done. He "obtained his title, but not in a manner to distinguish him. He was knighted at Whitehall two days before the coronation, but had to share the honour with 300 others."

It was not quite true that his "ambition was quenched." For the rest of Cecil's life Cecil was the first man at James's Court; and to the last there was one thing that Bacon would not appear to believe—he did not choose to believe that it was Cecil who kept him back from employment and honour. To the last he persisted in assuming that Cecil was the person who would help, if he could, a kinsman devoted to his interests and profoundly conscious of his worth. To the last he commended his cause to Cecil in terms of unstinted affection and confiding hope. It is difficult to judge of the sincerity of such language. The mere customary language of compliment employed by every one at this time was of a kind which to us sounds intolerable. It seems as if nothing that ingenuity could devise was too extravagant for an honest man to use, and for a man who respected himself to accept. It must not, indeed, be forgotten that conventionalities, as well as insincerity, differ in their forms in differ-

ent times; and that insincerity may lurk behind frank and clear words, when they are the fashion, as much as in what is like mere fulsome adulation. But words mean something, in spite of forms and fashions. When a man of great genius writes his private letters, we wish generally to believe on the whole what he says; and there are no limits to the esteem, the honour, the confidence, which Bacon continued to the end to express towards Cecil. Bacon appeared to trust him—appeared, in spite of continued disappointments, to rely on his good-will and good offices. But for one reason or another Bacon still remained in the shade. He was left to employ his time as he would, and to work his way by himself.

He was not idle. He prepared papers which he meant should come before the King, on the pressing subjects of the day. The Hampton Court conference between the Bishops and the Puritan leaders was at hand, and he drew up a moderating paper on the *Pacification of the Church*. The feeling against him for his conduct towards Essex had not died away, and he addressed to Lord Mountjoy that *Apology concerning the Earl of Essex*, so full of interest, so skilfully and forcibly written, so vivid a picture of the Queen's ways with her servants, which has every merit except that of clearing Bacon from the charge of disloyalty to his best friend. The various questions arising out of the relations of the two kingdoms, now united under James, were presenting themselves. They were not of easy solution, and great mischief would follow if they were solved wrongly. Bacon turned his attention to them. He addressed a discourse to the King on the union of the two kingdoms, the first of a series of discussions on the subject which Bacon made peculiarly his own, and which, no doubt, first drew the King's attention and favour to him.

But for the first year of James's reign he was unnoticed

by the King, and he was able to give his attention more freely to the great thought and hope of his life. This time of neglect gave him the opportunity of leisurely calling together and examining the ideas which had long had hold of his mind about the state of human knowledge, about the possibilities of extending it, about the hopes and powers which that new knowledge opened, and about the methods of realising this great prospect. This, the passion of his life, never asleep even in the hottest days of business or the most hopeless days of defeat, must have had full play during these days of suspended public employment. He was a man who was not easily satisfied with his attempts to arrange the order and proportions of his plans for mastering that new world of unknown truth, which he held to be within the grasp of man if he would only dare to seize it; and he was much given to vary the shape of his work, and to try experiments in composition and even style. He wrote and rewrote. Besides what was finally published, there remains a larger quantity of work which never reached the stage of publication. He repeated over and over again the same thoughts, the same images and characteristic sayings. Among these papers is one which sums up his convictions about the work before him, and the vocation to which he had been called in respect of it. It is in the form of a "Proem" to a treatise on the *Interpretation of Nature*. It was never used in his published works; but, as Mr. Spedding says, it has a peculiar value as an authentic statement of what he looked upon as his special business in life. It is this mission which he states to himself in the following paper. It is drawn up in "stately Latin." Mr. Spedding's translation is no unworthy representation of the words of the great Prophet of Knowledge:

"Believing that I was born for the service of mankind, and regarding the care of the Commonwealth as a kind of common property which, like the air and water, belongs to everybody, I set myself to consider in what way mankind might be best served, and what service I was myself best fitted by nature to perform.

"Now among all the benefits that could be conferred upon mankind, I found none so great as the discovery of new arts, endowments, and commodities for the bettering of man's life. . . . But if a man could succeed, not in striking out some particular invention, however useful, but in kindling a light in nature—a light that should in its very rising touch and illuminate all the border regions that confine upon the circle of our present knowledge; and so spreading further and further should presently disclose and bring into sight all that is most hidden and secret in the world—that man (I thought) would be the benefactor indeed of the human race—the propagator of man's empire over the universe, the champion of liberty, the conqueror and subduer of necessities.

"For myself, I found that I was fitted for nothing so well as for the study of Truth; as having a mind nimble and versatile enough to catch the resemblances of things (which is the chief point), and at the same time steady enough to fix and distinguish their subtler differences; as being gifted by nature with desire to seek, patience to doubt, fondness to meditate, slowness to assert, readiness to reconsider, carefulness to dispose and set in order; and as being a man that neither affects what is new nor admires what is old, and that hates every kind of imposture. So I thought my nature had a kind of familiarity and relationship with Truth.

"Nevertheless, because my birth and education had seasoned me in business of State; and because opinions (so young as I was) would sometimes stagger me; and because I thought that a man's own country has some special claims upon him more than the rest of the world; and because I hoped that, if I rose to any place of honour in the State, I should have a larger command of industry and ability to help me in my work—for these reasons I both applied myself to acquire the arts of civil life, and commended my service, so far as in modesty and honesty I might, to the favour of such friends as had any influence. In which also I had another motive: for I felt that those things I have spoken of—be they great or small—reach no further than the condition and culture of this mortal life; and I was

not without hope (the condition of religion being at that time not very prosperous) that if I came to hold office in the State, I might get something done too for the good of men's souls. When I found, however, that my zeal was mistaken for ambition, and my life had already reached the turning-point, and my breaking health reminded me how ill I could afford to be so slow, and I reflected, moreover, that in leaving undone the good that I could do by myself alone, and applying myself to that which could not be done without the help and consent of others, I was by no means discharging the duty that lay upon me—I put all those thoughts aside, and (in pursuance of my old determination) betook myself wholly to this work. Nor am I discouraged from it because I see signs in the times of the decline and overthrow of that knowledge and erudition which is now in use. Not that I apprehend any more barbarian invasions (unless possibly the Spanish empire should recover its strength, and having crushed other nations by arms should itself sink under its own weight); but the civil wars which may be expected, I think (judging from certain fashions which have come in of late), to spread through many countries—together with the malignity of sects, and those compendious artifices and devices which have crept into the place of solid erudition—seem to portend for literature and the sciences a tempest not less fatal, and one against which the Printing-office will be no effectual security. And no doubt but that fair-weather learning which is nursed by leisure, blossoms under reward and praise, which cannot withstand the shock of opinion, and is liable to be abused by tricks and quackery, will sink under such impediments as these. Far otherwise is it with that knowledge whose dignity is maintained by works of utility and power. For the injuries, therefore, which should proceed from the times, I am not afraid of them; and for the injuries which proceed from men, I am not concerned. For if any one charge me with seeking to be wise over-much, I answer simply that modesty and civil respect are fit for civil matters; in contemplations nothing is to be respected but Truth. If any one call on me for *works*, and that presently, I tell him frankly, without any imposture at all, that for me—a man not old, of weak health, my hands full of civil business, entering without guide or light upon an argument of all others the most obscure—I hold it enough to have constructed the machine, though I may not succeed in setting it on work. . . . If, again, any one ask me, not indeed for actual works, yet for definite premises

and forecasts of the works that are to be, I would have him know that the knowledge which we now possess will not teach a man even what to *wish*. Lastly—though this is a matter of less moment—if any of our politicians, who used to make their calculations and conjectures according to persons and precedents, must needs interpose his judgment in a thing of this nature, I would but remind him how (according to the ancient fable) the lame man keeping the course won the race of the swift man who left it; and that there is no thought to be taken about precedents, for the thing is without precedent.

“For myself, my heart is not set upon any of those things which depend upon external accidents. I am not hunting for fame: I have no desire to found a sect, after the fashion of heresiarchs; and to look for any private gain from such an undertaking as this I count both ridiculous and base. Enough for me the consciousness of well-deserving, and those real and effectual results with which Fortune itself cannot interfere.”

In 1604 James's first Parliament met, and with it Bacon returned to an industrious public life, which was not to be interrupted till it finally came to an end with his strange and irretrievable fall. The opportunity had come; and Bacon, patient, vigilant, and conscious of great powers and indefatigable energy, fully aware of all the conditions of the time, pushed at once to the front in the House of Commons. He lost no time in showing that he meant to make himself felt. The House of Commons had no sooner met than it was involved in a contest with the Chancery, with the Lords, and finally with the King himself, about its privileges—in this case its exclusive right to judge of the returns of its members. Bacon's time was come for showing the King both that he was willing to do him service, and that he was worth being employed. He took a leading part in the discussions, and was trusted by the House as their spokesman and reporter in the various conferences. The King, in his overweening confidence in

his absolute prerogative, had, indeed, got himself into serious difficulty; for the privilege was one which it was impossible for the Commons to give up. But Bacon led the House to agree to an arrangement which saved their rights; and under a cloud of words of extravagant flattery he put the King in good-humour, and elicited from him the spontaneous proposal of a compromise which ended a very dangerous dispute. "The King's voice," said Bacon, in his report to the House, "was the voice of God in man, the good spirit of God in the mouth of man; I do not say the voice of God and not of man; I am not one of Herod's flatterers; a curse fell upon him that said it, a curse on him that suffered it. We might say, as was said to Solomon, We are glad, O King, that we give account to you, because you discern what is spoken."

The course of this Parliament, in which Bacon was active and prominent, showed the King, probably for the first time, what Bacon was. The session was not so stormy as some of the later ones; but occasions arose which revealed to the King and to the House of Commons the deeply discordant assumptions and purposes by which each party was influenced, and which brought out Bacon's powers of adjusting difficulties and harmonising claims. He never wavered in his loyalty to his own House, where it is clear that his authority was great. But there was no limit to the submission and reverence which he expressed to the King, and, indeed, to his desire to bring about what the King desired, as far as it could be safely done. Dealing with the Commons, his policy was "to be content with the substance and not to stand on the form." Dealing with the King, he was forward to recognise all that James wanted recognised of his kingcraft and his absolute sovereignty. Bacon assailed with a force and keenness which

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showed what he could do as an opponent, the amazing and intolerable grievances arising out of the survival of such feudal customs as Wardship and Purveyance; customs which made over a man's eldest son and property, during a minority, to the keeping of the King, that is, to a King's favourite, and allowed the King's servants to cut down a man's timber before the windows of his house. But he urged that these grievances should be taken away with the utmost tenderness for the King's honour and the King's purse. In the great and troublesome questions relating to the Union he took care to be fully prepared. He was equally strong on points of certain and substantial importance, equally quick to suggest accommodations where nothing substantial was touched. His attitude was one of friendly and respectful independence. It was not misunderstood by the King. Bacon, who had hitherto been an unsworn and unpaid member of the Learned Counsel, now received his office by patent, with a small salary, and he was charged with the grave business of preparing the work for the Commissioners for the Union of the Kingdoms, in which, when the Commission met, he took a foremost and successful part.

But the Parliament before which their report was to be laid did not meet till ten months after the work of the Commission was done (Dec., 1604 — Nov., 1605). For nearly another year Bacon had no public work. The leisure was used for his own objects. He was interested in history in a degree only second to his interest in nature; indeed, but for the engrossing claims of his philosophy of nature, he might have been the first and one of the greatest of our historians. He addressed a letter to the Chancellor Ellesmere on the deficiencies of British history, and on the opportunities which offered for supplying



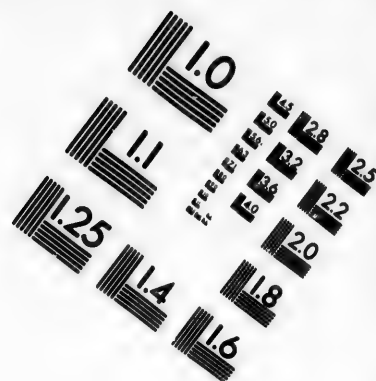
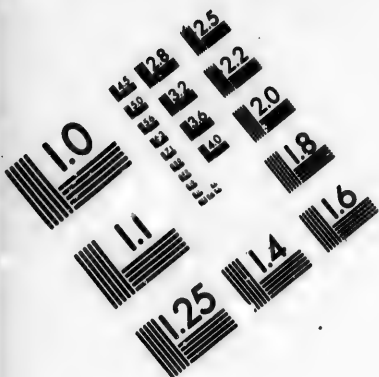
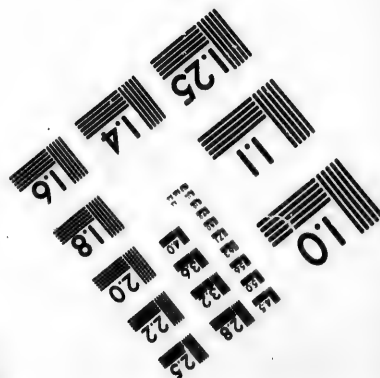
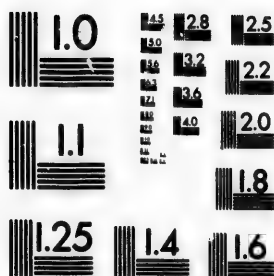


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them. He himself could at present do nothing; "but because there be so many good painters, both for hand and colours, it needeth but encouragement and instructions to give life and light unto it." But he mistook, in this as in other instances, the way in which such things are done. Men do not accomplish such things to order, but because their souls compel them, as he himself was building up his great philosophical structure, in the midst of his ambition and disappointment. And this interval of quiet enabled him to bring out his first public appeal on the subject which most filled his mind. He completed in English the *Two Books of the Advancement of Knowledge*, which were published at a book-shop at the gateway of Gray's Inn in Holborn (Oct., 1605). He intended that it should be published in Latin also; but he was dissatisfied with the ornate translation sent him from Cambridge, and probably he was in a hurry to get the book out. It was dedicated to the King, not merely by way of compliment, but with the serious hope that his interest might be awakened in the subjects which were nearest Bacon's heart. Like other of Bacon's hopes, it was disappointed. The King's studies and the King's humours were not of the kind to make him care for Bacon's visions of the future, or his eager desire to begin at once a novel method of investigating the facts and laws of nature; and the appeal to him fell dead. Bacon sent the book about to his friends with explanatory letters. To Sir T. Bodley he writes:

"I think no man may more truly say with the Psalm, *Multum incola fuit anima mea* [Ps. 120] than myself. For I do confess since I was of any understanding, my mind hath in effect been absent from that I have done; and in absence are many errors which I willingly acknowledge; and among them, this great one which led the rest—that knowing myself by inward calling to be fitter to hold a book

than to play a part, I have led my life in civil causes, for which I was not very fit by nature, and more unfit by the preoccupation of my mind. Therefore, calling myself home, I have now enjoyed myself; whereof likewise I desire to make the world partaker."

To Lord Salisbury, in a note of elaborate compliment, he describes his purpose by an image which he repeats more than once. "I shall content myself to awake better spirits, *like a bell-ringer, which is first up to call others to church.*" But the two friends whose judgment he chiefly valued, and who, as on other occasions, were taken into his most intimate literary confidence, were Bishop Andrewes, his "inquisitor," and Toby Matthews, a son of the Archbishop of York, who had become a Roman Catholic, and lived in Italy, seeing a good deal of learned men there, apparently the most trusted of all Bacon's friends.

When Parliament met again in November, 1605, the Gunpowder Plot and its consequences filled all minds. Bacon was not employed about it by Government, and his work in the House was confined to carrying on matters left unfinished from the previous session. On the rumour of legal promotions and vacancies Bacon once more applied to Salisbury for the Solicitorship (March, 1606). But no changes were made, and Bacon was "still next the door." In May, 1606, he did what had for some time been in his thoughts: he married; not the lady whom Essex had tried to win for him, that Lady Hatton who became the wife of his rival Coke, but one whom Salisbury helped him to gain, an alderman's daughter, Alice Barnham, "an handsome maiden," with some money and a disagreeable mother, by her second marriage, Lady Packington. Bacon's curious love of pomp amused the gossips of the day. "Sir Francis Bacon," writes Carleton to Chamberlain,

"was married yesterday to his young wench, in Maribone Chapel. He was clad from top to toe in purple, and hath made himself and his wife such store of raiments of cloth of silver and gold that it draws deep into her portion." Of his married life we hear next to nothing: in his *Essay on Marriage* he is not enthusiastic in its praise; almost the only thing we know is that in his will, twenty years afterwards, he showed his dissatisfaction with his wife, who after his death married again. But it gave him an additional reason, and an additional plea, for pressing for preferment, and in the summer of 1606 the opening came. Coke was made Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, leaving the Attorney's place vacant. A favourite of Salisbury's, Hobart, became Attorney, and Bacon hoped for some arrangement by which the Solicitor Doddridge might be otherwise provided for, and he himself become Solicitor. Hopeful as he was, and patient of disappointments, and of what other men would have thought injustice and faithlessness, he felt keenly both the disgrace and the inconvenience of so often expecting place, and being so often passed over. While the question was pending, he wrote to the King, the Chancellor, and Salisbury. His letter to the King is a record in his own words of his public services. To the Chancellor, whom he believed to be his supporter, he represented the discredit which he suffered—"he was a common gaze and a speech;" "the little reputation which by his industry he gathered, being scattered and taken away by continual disgraces, *every new man coming above me*;" and his wife and his wife's friends were making him feel it. The letters show what Bacon thought to be his claims, and how hard he found it to get them recognised. To the Chancellor he urged, among other things, that time was slipping by—

"I humbly pray your Lordship to consider that time groweth precious with me, and that a married man is seven years elder in his thoughts the first day. . . . And were it not to satisfy my wife's friends, and to get myself out of being a common gaze and a speech, I protest before God I would never speak word for it. But to conclude, as my honourable Lady your wife was some mean to make me to change the name of another, so if it please you to help me to change my own name, I can be but more and more bounden to you; and I am much deceived if your Lordship find not the King well inclined, and my Lord of Salisbury forward and affectionate."

To Salisbury he writes:

"I may say to your Lordship, in the confidence of your poor kinsman, and of a man by you advanced, *Tu idem fer opem, qui spem dedisti*; for I am sure it was not possible for any living man to have received from another more significant and comfortable words of hope; your Lordship being pleased to tell me, during the course of my last service, that you would raise me; and that when you had resolved to raise a man, you were more careful of him than himself; and that what you had done for me in my marriage was a benefit to me, but of no use to your Lordship. . . . And I know, and all the world knoweth, that your Lordship is no dealer of holy water, but noble and real; and on my part I am of a sure ground that I have committed nothing that may deserve alteration. And therefore my hope is your Lordship will finish a good work, and consider that time groweth precious with me, and that I am now *vergentibus annis*. And although I know your fortune is not to need an hundred such as I am, yet I shall be ever ready to give you my best and first fruits, and to supply (as much as in me lieth) worthiness by thankfulness."

Still the powers were deaf to his appeals; at any rate he had to be content with another promise. Considering the ability which he had shown in Parliament, the wisdom and zeal with which he had supported the Government, and the important position which he held in the House of Commons, the neglect of him is unintelligible, except on two suppositions: that the Government, that is Cecil, were

afraid of anything but the mere routine of law, as represented by such men as Hobart and Doddridge; or that Coke's hostility to him was unabated, and Coke still too important to be offended.

Bacon returned to work when the Parliament met, November, 1606. The questions arising out of the Union, the question of naturalisation, its grounds and limits, the position of Scotchmen born *before* or *since* the King's accession, the *Antenati* and *Postnati*, the question of a union of laws, with its consequences, were discussed with great keenness and much jealous feeling. On the question of naturalisation Bacon took the liberal and larger view. The immediate union of laws he opposed as premature. He was a willing servant of the House, and the House readily made use of him. He reported the result of conferences, even when his own opinion was adverse to that of the House. And he reported the speeches of such persons as Lord Salisbury, probably throwing into them both form and matter of his own. At length, "silently, on the 25th of June," 1607, he was appointed Solicitor-General. He was then forty-seven.

"It was also probably about this time," writes Mr. Spedding, "that Bacon finally settled the plan of his '*Great Instauration*,' and began to call it by that name."

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CHAPTER IV.

BACON SOLICITOR-GENERAL.

THE great thinker and idealist, the great seer of a world of knowledge to which the men of his own generation were blind, and which they could not, even with his help, imagine a possible one, had now won the first step in that long and toilsome ascent to success in life, in which for fourteen years he had been baffled. He had made himself, for good and for evil, a servant of the Government of James I. He was prepared to discharge with zeal and care all his duties. He was prepared to perform all the services which that Government might claim from its servants. He had sought, he had passionately pressed to be admitted within that circle in which the will of the King was the supreme law; after that, it would have been ruin to have withdrawn or resisted. But it does not appear that the thought or wish to resist or withdraw ever presented itself; he had thoroughly convinced himself that in doing what the King required he was doing the part of a good citizen, and a faithful servant of the State and Commonwealth. The two lives, the two currents of purpose and effort, were still there. Behind all the wrangle of the courts and the devising of questionable legal subtleties to support some unconstitutional encroachment, or to outflank the defence of some obnoxious prisoner, the high philo-

sophical meditations still went on; the remembrance of their sweetness and grandeur wrung more than once from the jaded lawyer or the baffled counsellor the complaint, in words which had a great charm for him, *Multum incola fuit anima mea*—"My soul hath long dwelt" where it would not be. But opinion and ambition and the immense convenience of being great and rich and powerful, and the supposed necessities of his condition, were too strong even for his longings to be the interpreter and the servant of nature. There is no trace of the faintest reluctance on his part to be the willing minister of a court of which not only the principal figure, but the arbiter and governing spirit, was to be George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

The first leisure that Bacon had after he was appointed Solicitor he used in a characteristic way. He sat down to make a minute stock-taking of his position and its circumstances. In the summer of 1608 he devoted a week of July to this survey of his life, its objects and its appliances; and he jotted down, day by day, through the week, from his present reflections, or he transcribed from former note-books, a series of notes in loose order, mostly very rough and not always intelligible, about everything that could now concern him. This curious and intimate record, which he called *Commentarius Solutus*, was discovered by Mr. Spedding, who not unnaturally had some misgivings about publishing so secret and so ambiguous a record of a man's most private confidences with himself. But there it was, and, as it was known, he no doubt decided wisely in publishing it as it stands; he has done his best to make it intelligible, and he has also done his best to remove any unfavourable impressions that might arise from it. It is singularly interesting as an

evidence of Bacon's way of working, of his watchfulness, his industry, his care in preparing himself long beforehand for possible occasions, his readiness to take any amount of trouble about his present duties, his self-reliant desire for more important and difficult ones. It exhibits his habit of self-observation and self-correction, his care to mend his natural defects of voice, manner, and delivery; it is even more curious in showing him watching his own physical constitution and health, in the most minute details of symptoms and remedies, equally with a scientific and a practical object. It contains his estimate of his income, his expenditure, his debts, schedules of lands and jewels, his rules for the economy of his estate, his plans for his new gardens and terraces and ponds and buildings at Gorchambury. He was now a rich man, valuing his property at £24,155 and his income at £4975, burdened with a considerable debt, but not more than he might easily look to wipe out. But, besides all these points, there appear the two large interests of his life—the reform of philosophy, and his ideal of a great national policy. The “greatness of Britain” was one of his favourite subjects of meditation. He puts down in his notes the outline of what should be aimed at to secure and increase it; it is to make the various forces of the great and growing empire work together in harmonious order, without waste, without jealousy, without encroachment and collision; to unite not only the interests but the sympathies and aims of the Crown with those of the people and Parliament; and so to make Britain, now in peril from nothing but from the strength of its own discordant elements, that “Monarchy of the West” in reality, which Spain was in show, and, as Bacon always maintained, only in show. The survey of the condition of his philosophical enterprise takes more

space. He notes the stages and points to which his plans have reached; he indicates, with a favourite quotation or apophthegm—"Plus ultra"—"*ausus vana contemnere*"—"aditus non nisi sub persona infantis," soon to be familiar to the world in his published writings—the lines of argument, sometimes alternative ones, which were before him; he draws out schemes of inquiry, specimen tables, distinctions and classifications about the subject of Motion, in English interlarded with Latin, or in Latin interlarded with English, of his characteristic and practical sort; he notes the various sources from which he might look for help and co-operation—"of learned men beyond the seas"—"to begin first in France to print it"—"laying for a place to command wits and pens;" he has his eye on rich and childless bishops, on the enforced idleness of State prisoners in the Tower, like Northumberland and Raleigh, on the great schools and universities, where he might perhaps get hold of some college for "Inventors"—as we should say, for the endowment of research. These matters fill up a large space of his notes. But his thoughts were also busy about his own advancement. And to these sheets of miscellaneous memoranda Bacon confided not only his occupations and his philosophical and political ideas, but, with a curious innocent unreserve, the arts and methods which he proposed to use in order to win the favour of the great and to pull down the reputation of his rivals. He puts down in detail how he is to recommend himself to the King and the King's favourites—

"To set on foot and maintain access with his Majesty, Dean of the Chapel, May, Murray. Keeping a course of access at the beginning of every term and vacation, with a memorial. To attend some time his repasts, or to fall into a course of familiar discourse. To find means to win a conceit, not open, but private, of being affec-

tionate and assured to the Scotch, and fit to succeed Salisbury in his manage in that kind; Lord Dunbar, Duke of Lennox, and Daubiny: secret."

Then, again, of Salisbury—

"Insinuate myself to become privy to my Lord of Salisbury's estate," "To correspond with Salisbury in a habit of natural but no ways perilous boldness, and in vivacity, invention, care so cast and enterprise (but with due caution), for this manner I judge both in his nature freeth the stands, and in his ends pleaseth him best, and promiseth more use of me. I judge my standing out, and not favoured by Northampton, must needs do me good with Salisbury, especially comparative to the Attorney."

The Attorney Hobart filled the place to which Bacon had so long aspired, and which he thought, perhaps reasonably, that he could fill much better. At any rate, one of the points to which he recurs frequently in his notes is to exhort himself to make his own service a continual contrast to the Attorney's—"to have in mind and use the Attorney's weakness," enumerating a list of instances: "Too full of cases and distinctions. Nibbling solemnly, he distinguisheth but apprehends not;" "No gift with his pen in proclamations and the like;" and at last he draws out in a series of epigrams his view of "Hubbard's disadvantages"—

"Better at shift than at drift. . . *Subtilitas sine acrimonia*. . . No power with the judge. . . He will alter a thing but not mend. . . He puts into patents and deeds words not of law but of common sense and discourse. . . Sociable save in profit. . . He doth depopulate mine office; otherwise called inclose. . . I never knew any one of so good a speech with a worse pen." . .

Then in a marginal note—"Solemn goose. Stately, leastwise nodd (?) crafty. They have made him believe that he is wondrous wise." And, finally, he draws up a

paper of counsels and rules for his own conduct—" *Custumæ aptæ ad Individuum* "—which might supply an outline for an essay on the arts of behaviour proper for a rising official, a sequel to the biting irony of the essays on *Cunning and Wisdom for a Man's Self*.

"To furnish my L. of S. with ornaments for public speeches. To make him think how he should be revered by a Lord Chancellor, if I were; Princelike.

"To prepare him for matters to be handled in Council or before the King aforehand, and to show him and yield him the fruits of my care.

"To take notes in tables, when I attend the Council, and sometimes to move out of a memorial shewed and seen. To have particular occasions, fit and graceful and continual, to maintain private speech with every the great persons, and sometimes drawing more than one together. *Ex imitatione Att.* This specially in public places, and without care or affectation. At Council table to make good my L. of Salisb. motions and speeches, and for the rest sometimes one sometimes another; chiefly his, that is most earnest and in affection.

"To suppress at once my speaking, with panting and labour of breath and voice. Not to fall upon the main too sudden, but to induce and intermingle speech of good fashion. To use at once upon entrance given of speech, though abrupt, to compose and draw in myself. To free myself at once from payt. (?) of formality and compliment, though with some show of carelessness, pride, and rudeness."

(And then follows a long list of matters of business to be attended to.)

These arts of a court were not new; it was not new for men to observe them in their neighbours and rivals. What was new was the writing them down, with deliberate candour, among a man's private memoranda, as things to be done and with the intention of practising them. This of itself, it has been suggested, shows that they were unfamiliar and uncongenial to Bacon; for a man reminds himself of

what he is apt to forget. But a man reminds himself also of what seems to him, at the moment, most important, and what he lays most stress upon. And it is clear that these are the rules, rhetorical and ethical, which Bacon laid down for himself in pursuing the second great object of his life—his official advancement; and that, whatever we think of them, they were the means which he deliberately approved.

As long as Salisbury lived, the distrust which had kept Bacon so long in the shade kept him at a distance from the King's ear, and from influence on his counsels. Salisbury was the one Englishman in whom the King had become accustomed to confide, in his own conscious strangeness to English ways and real dislike and suspicion of them; Salisbury had an authority which no one else had, both from his relations with James at the end of Elizabeth's reign, and as the representative of her policy and the depositary of its traditions; and if he had lived, things might not, perhaps, have been better in James's government, but many things, probably, would have been different. But while Salisbury was supreme, Bacon, though very alert and zealous, was mainly busied with his official work; and the Solicitor's place had become, as he says, a "mean thing" compared with the Attorney's, and also an extremely laborious place—"one of the painfulest places in the kingdom." Much of it was routine, but responsible and fatiguing routine. But if he was not in Salisbury's confidence, he was prominent in the House of Commons. The great and pressing subject of the time was the increasing difficulties of the revenue, created partly by the inevitable changes of a growing state, but much more by the King's incorrigible wastefulness. It was impossible to realise completely the great dream and longing of the Stuart kings and their ministers to make the Crown independent

of parliamentary supplies; but to dispense with these supplies as much as possible, and to make as much as possible of the revenue permanent, was the continued and fatal policy of the Court. The "Great Contract"—a scheme by which, in return for the surrender by the Crown of certain burdensome and dangerous claims of the Prerogative, the Commons were to assure a large compensating yearly income to the Crown—was Salisbury's favourite device during the last two years of his life. It was not a prosperous one. The bargain was an ill-imagined and not very decorous transaction between the King and his people. Both parties were naturally jealous of one another, suspicious of underhand dealing and tacit changes of terms, prompt to resent and take offence, and not easy to pacify when they thought advantage had been taken; and Salisbury, either by his own fault, or by yielding to the King's canny shiftiness, gave the business a more haggling and huckstering look than it need have had. Bacon, a subordinate of the Government, but a very important person in the Commons, did his part, loyally, as it seems, and skilfully in smoothing differences and keeping awkward questions from making their appearance. Thus he tried to stave off the risk of bringing definitely to a point the King's cherished claim to levy "impositions," or custom duties, on merchandise, by virtue of his prerogative—a claim which he warned the Commons not to dispute, and which Bacon, maintaining it as legal in theory, did his best to prevent them from discussing, and to persuade them to be content with restraining. Whatever he thought of the "Great Contract," he did what was expected of him in trying to gain for it fair play. But he made time for other things also. He advised, and advised soundly, on the plantation and finance of Ireland. It was a subject in which he took

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deep interest. A few years later, with only too sure a foresight, he gave the warning, "lest Ireland civil become more dangerous to us than Ireland savage." He advised—not soundly in point of law, but curiously in accordance with modern notions—about endowments; though, in this instance, in the famous will case of Thomas Sutton, the founder of the Charter House, his argument probably covered the scheme of a monstrous job in favour of the needy Court. And his own work went on in spite of the pressure of the Solicitor's place. To the first years of his official life belong three very interesting fragments, intended to find a provisional place in the plan of the "Great Instauration." To his friend Toby Matthews, at Florence, he sent in manuscript the great attack on the old teachers of knowledge, which is perhaps the most brilliant, and also the most insolently unjust and unthinking piece of rhetoric ever composed by him—the *Redargutio Philosophiarum*.

"I send you at this time the only part which hath any harshness; and yet I framed to myself an opinion, that whosoever allowed well of that preface which you so much commend, will not dislike, or at least ought not to dislike, this other speech of preparation; for it is written out of the same spirit, and out of the same necessity. Nay it doth more fully lay open that the question between me and the ancients is not of the virtue of the race, but of the rightness of the way. And to speak truth, it is to the other but as *palma* to *pugnus*, part of the same thing more large. . . . Myself am like the miller of Huntingdon, that was wont to pray for peace amongst the willows; for while the winds blew, the wind-mills wrought, and the water-mill was less customed. So I see that controversies of religion must hinder the advancement of sciences. Let me conclude with my perpetual wish towards yourself, that the approbation of yourself by your own discreet and temperate carriage, may restore you to your country, and your friends to your society. And so I commend you to God's goodness.

"Gray's Inn, this 10th of October, 1609."

To Bishop Andrewes he sent, also in manuscript, another piece, belonging to the same plan—the deeply impressive treatise called *Visa et Cogitata*—what Francis Bacon had seen of nature and knowledge, and what he had come by meditation to think of what he had seen. The letter is not less interesting than the last, in respect to the writer's purposes, his manner of writing, and his relations to his correspondent.

"MY VERY GOOD LORD,—Now your Lordship hath been so long in the church and the palace disputing between kings and popes, methinks you should take pleasure to look into the field, and refresh your mind with some matter of philosophy, though that science be now through age waxed a child again, and left to boys and young men; and because you were wont to make me believe you took liking to my writings, I send you some of this vacation's fruits, and thus much more of my mind and purpose. I hasten not to publish; perishing I would prevent. And I am forced to respect as well my times as the matter. For with me it is thus, and I think with all men in my case, if I bind myself to an argument, it loadeth my mind; but if I rid my mind of the present cogitation, it is rather a recreation. This hath put me into these miscellanies, which I purpose to suppress, if God give me leave to write a just and perfect volume of philosophy, which I go on with, though slowly. I send not your Lordship too much, lest it may glut you. Now let me tell you what my desire is. If your Lordship be so good now as when you were the good Dean of Westminster, my request to you is, that not by pricks, but by notes, you would mark unto me whatsoever shall seem unto you either not current in the style, or harsh to credit and opinion, or inconvenient for the person of the writer; for no man can be judge and party, and when our minds judge by reflection of ourselves, they are more subject to error. And though for the matter itself my judgement be in some things fixed, and not accessible by any man's judgement that goeth not my way, yet even in those things the admonition of a friend may make me express myself diversly. I would have come to your Lordship, but that I am hastening to my house in the country. And so I commend your Lordship to God's goodness."

There was yet another production of this time, of which we have a notice from himself in a letter to Toby Matthews, the curious and ingenious little treatise on the *Wisdom of the Ancients*, "one of the most popular of his works," says Mr. Spedding, "in his own and in the next generation," but of value to us mainly for its quaint poetical colour, and the unexpected turns, like answers to a riddle, given to the ancient fables. When this work was published, it was the third time that he had appeared as an author in print. He thus writes about it and himself :

"MR. MATTHEWS,—I do heartily thank you for your letter of the 24th of August from Salamanca; and in recompense thereof I send you a little work of mine that hath begun to pass the world. They tell me my Latin is turned into silver, and become current. Had you been here, you should have been my inquisitor before it came forth; but I think the greatest inquisitor in Spain will allow it. . . . My great work goeth forward, and, after my manner, I alter ever when I add. So that nothing is finished till all be finished.

"From Gray's Inn, the 17th of February, 1610."

In the autumn of 1611 the Attorney-General was ill, and Bacon reminded both the King and Salisbury of his claim. He was afraid, he writes to the King, with an odd forgetfulness of the persistency and earnestness of his applications, "that *by reason of my slowness to sue*, and apprehend occasions upon the sudden, keeping one plain course of painful service, I may *in fine dierum* be in danger to be neglected and forgotten." The Attorney recovered, but Bacon, on New Year's Tide of 1611, wrote to Salisbury to thank him for his good-will. It is the last letter of Bacon's to Salisbury which has come down to us.

"IT MAY PLEASE YOUR GOOD LORDSHIP,—I would entreat the new year to answer for the old, in my humble thanks to your Lordship, both for many your favours, and chiefly that upon the occasion of

Mr. Attorney's infirmity I found your Lordship even as I would wish. This doth increase a desire in me to express my thankful mind to your Lordship; hoping that though I find age and decays grow upon me, yet I may have a flash or two of spirit left to do you service. And I do protest before God, without compliment or any light vein of mind, that if I knew in what course of life to do you best service, I would take it, and make my thoughts, which now fly to many pieces, be reduced to that center. But all this is no more than I am, which is not much, but yet the entire of him that is——"

In the following May (May 24, 1612) Salisbury died. From this date James passed from government by a minister, who, whatever may have been his faults, was laborious, public-spirited, and a statesman, into his own keeping and into the hands of favourites, who cared only for themselves. With Cecil ceased the traditions of the days of Elizabeth and Burghley, in many ways evil and cruel traditions, but not ignoble and sordid ones; and James was left without the stay, and also without the check, which Cecil's power had been to him. The field was open for new men and new ways; the fashions and ideas of the time had altered during the last ten years, and those of the Queen's days had gone out of date. Would the new turn out for the better or the worse? Bacon, at any rate, saw the significance of the change and the critical eventfulness of the moment. It was his habit of old to send memorials of advice to the heads of the Government, apparently without such suggestions seeming more intrusive or officious than a leading article seems now, and perhaps with much the same effect. It was now a time to do so, if ever; and he was in an official relation to the King which entitled him to proffer advice. He at once prepared to lay his thoughts before the King, and to suggest that he could do far better service than Cecil, and was ready to take his place. The policy of the "Great Contract" had certainly broken

down, and the King, under Cecil's guidance, had certainly not known how to manage an English parliament. In writing to the King he found it hard to satisfy himself. Several draft letters remain, and it is not certain which of them, if any, was sent. But immediately on Salisbury's death he began, May 29th, a letter in which he said that he had never yet been able to show his affection to the King, "having been as a hawk tied to another's fist;" and if, "as was said to one that spake great words, *Amice, verba tua desiderant civitatem*, your Majesty say to me, *Bacon, your words require a place to speak them*," yet that "place or not place" was with the King. But the draft breaks off abruptly, and with the date of the 31st we have the following:

"Your Majesty hath lost a great subject and a great servant. But if I should praise him in propriety, I should say that he was a fit man to keep things from growing worse, but no very fit man to reduce things to be much better. For he loved to have the eyes of all Israel a little too much upon himself, and to have all business still under the hammer, and like clay in the hands of the potter, to mould it as he thought good; so that he was more *in operatione* than *in opere*. And though he had fine passages of action, yet the real conclusions came slowly on. So that although your Majesty hath grave counselors and worthy persons left, yet you do as it were turn a leaf, wherein if your Majesty shall give a frame and constitution to matters, before you place the persons, in my simple opinion it were not amiss. But the great matter and most instant for the present, is the consideration of a Parliament, for two effects: the one for the supply of your estate, the other for the better knitting of the hearts of your subjects unto your Majesty, according to your infinite merit; for both which, Parliaments have been and are the antient and honourable remedy.

"Now because I take myself to have a little skill in that region, as one that ever affected that your Majesty mought in all your causes not only prevail, but prevail with satisfaction of the inner man; and though no man can say but I was a perfect and peremptory royalist, yet every man makes me believe that I was never one hour out of

credit with the Lower House; my desire is to know whether your Majesty will give me leave to meditate and propound unto you some preparative remembrances touching the future Parliament."

Whether he sent this or not, he prepared another draft. What had happened in the mean while we know not, but Bacon was in a bitter mood, and the letter reveals, for the first time, what was really in Bacon's heart about the "great subject and great servant," of whom he had just written so respectfully, and with whom he had been so closely connected for most of his life. The fierceness which had been gathering for years of neglect and hindrance under that placid and patient exterior broke out. He offered himself as Cecil's successor in business of State. He gave his reason for being hopeful of success. Cecil's bitterest enemy could not have given it more bitterly.

"My principal end being to do your Majesty service, I crave leave to make at this time to your Majesty this most humble oblation of myself. I may truly say with the psalm, *Multum incola fuit anima mea*, for my life hath been conversant in things wherein I take little pleasure. Your Majesty may have heard somewhat that my father was an honest man, and somewhat you may have seen of myself, though not to make any true judgement by, because I have hitherto had only *potestatem verborum*, nor that neither. I was three of my young years bred with an ambassador in France, and since I have been an old truant in the school-house of your council-chamber, though on the second form, yet longer than any that now sitteth hath been upon the head form. If your Majesty find any aptness in me, or if you find any scarcity in others, whereby you may think it fit for your service to remove me to business of State, although I have a fair way before me for profit (and by your Majesty's grace and favour for honour and advancement), and in a course less exposed to the blasts of fortune, yet now that he is gone, *quo vivente virtutibus certissimum exitium*, I will be ready as a chessman to be wherever your Majesty's royal hand shall set me. Your Majesty will bear me witness, I have not suddenly opened myself thus far. I have looked

upon others, I see the exceptions, I see the distractions, and I fear Tacitus will be a prophet, *magis alii homines quam alii mores*. I know mine own heart, and I know not whether God that hath touched my heart with the affection may not touch your royal heart to discern it. Howsoever, I shall at least go on honestly in mine ordinary course, and supply the rest in prayers for you, remaining, etc."

This is no hasty outburst. In a later paper on the true way of retrieving the disorders of the King's finances, full of large and wise counsel, after advising the King not to be impatient, and assuring him that a state of debt is not so intolerable—"for it is no new thing for the greatest Kings to be in debt," and all the great men of the Court had been in debt without any "manner of diminution of their greatness"—he returns to the charge in detail against Salisbury and the Great Contract.

"My second prayer is, that your Majesty—in respect to the hasty freeing of your state—would not descend to any means, or degree of means, which carrieth not a symmetry with your Majesty and greatness. *He is gone from whom those courses did wholly flow*. To have your wants and necessities in particular as it were hanged up in two tablets before the eyes of your lords and commons, to be talked of for four months together; To have all your courses to help yourself in revenue or profit put into printed books, which were wont to be held *arcana imperii*; To have such worms of aldermen to lend for ten in the hundred upon good assurance, and with such entreaty (?) as if it should save the bark of your fortune; To contract still where mought be had the readiest payment, and not the best bargain; To stir a number of projects for your profit, and then to blast them, and leave your Majesty nothing but the scandal of them; To pretend even carriage between your Majesty's rights and ease of the people, and to satisfy neither. These courses and others the like I hope are gone with the decay of them; which have turned your Majesty to inestimable prejudice."

And what he thought of saying, but on further consideration struck out, was the following. It is no wonder

that he struck it out, but it shows what he felt towards Cecil.

"I protest to God, though I be not superstitious, when I saw your M.'s book against Vorstius and Arminius, and noted your zeal to deliver the majesty of God from the vain and indigne comprehensions of heresy and degenerate philosophy, as you had by your pen formerly endeavoured to deliver kings from the usurpation of Rome, *percussit illico animum* that God would set shortly upon you some visible favour, and let me not live if I thought not of the taking away of that man."

And from this time onwards he scarcely ever mentions Cecil's name in his correspondence with James but with words of condemnation, which imply that Cecil's mischievous policy was the result of private ends. Yet this was the man to whom he had written the "New Year's Tide" letter six months before; a letter which is but an echo to the last of all that he had been accustomed to write to Cecil when asking assistance or offering congratulation. Cecil had, indeed, little claim on Bacon's gratitude; he had spoken him fair in public, and no doubt in secret distrusted and thwarted him. But to the last Bacon did not choose to acknowledge this. Had James disclosed something of his dead servant, who left some strange secrets behind him, which showed his unsuspected hostility to Bacon? Except on this supposition (but there is nothing to support it), no exaggeration of the liberty allowed to the language of compliment is enough to clear Bacon of an insincerity which is almost inconceivable in any but the meanest tools of power.

"I assure myself," wrote Bacon to the King, "your Majesty taketh not me for one of a busy nature; for my estate being free from all difficulties, and I having such a large field for contemplation, as I have partly and shall much

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more make manifest unto your Majesty and the world, to occupy my thoughts, nothing could make me active but love and affection." So Bacon described his position with questionable accuracy—for his estate was not "free from difficulties"—in the new time coming. He was still kept out of the inner circle of the Council; but from the moment of Salisbury's death he became a much more important person. He still sued for advancement, and still met with disappointment; the "mean men" still rose above him. The lucrative place of Master of the Wards was vacated by Salisbury's death. Bacon was talked of for it, and probably expected it, for he drew up new rules for it, and a speech for the new master; but the office and the speech went to Sir George Carey. Soon after Sir George Carey died. Bacon then applied for it through the new favourite, Rochester. "He was so confident of the place that he put most of his men into new cloaks;" and the world of the day amused itself at his disappointment, when the place was given to another "mean man," Sir Walter Cope, of whom the gossips wrote that if the "last two Treasurers could look out of their graves to see those successors in that place, they would be out of countenance with themselves, and say to the world *quantum mutatus*." But Bacon's hand and counsel appear more and more in important matters—the improvement of the revenue; the defence of extreme rights of the prerogative in the case against Whitelocke; the great question of calling a parliament, and of the true and "princely" way of dealing with it. His confidential advice to the King about calling a parliament was marked by his keen perception of the facts of the situation; it was marked too by his confident reliance on skilful indirect methods and trust in the look of things; it bears traces also of his bitter feeling against Salisbury, whom he charges with treacherously fo-

menting the opposition of the last Parliament. There was no want of worldly wisdom in it; certainly it was more adapted to James's ideas of state-craft than the simpler plan of Sir Henry Nevill, that the King should throw himself frankly on the loyalty and good-will of Parliament. And thus he came to be on easy terms with James, who was quite capable of understanding Bacon's resource and nimbleness of wit. In the autumn of 1613 the Chief-Justiceship of the King's Bench became vacant. Bacon at once gave the King reasons for sending Coke from the Common Pleas—where he was a check on the prerogative—to the King's Bench, where he could do less harm; while Hobart went to the Common Pleas. The promotion was obvious, but the Common Pleas suited Coke better, and the place was more lucrative. Bacon's advice was followed. Coke, very reluctantly, knowing well who had given it, and why, "not only weeping himself but followed by the tears" of all the Court of Common Pleas, moved up to the higher post. The Attorney Hobart succeeded, and Bacon at last became Attorney (October 27, 1613). In Chamberlain's gossip we have an indication, such as occurs only accidentally, of the view of outsiders: "There is a strong apprehension that little good is to be expected by this change, and that Bacon may prove a dangerous instrument."

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CHAPTER V.

BACON ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND CHANCELLOR.

THUS, at last, at the age of fifty-two, Bacon had gained the place which Essex had tried to get for him at thirty-two. The time of waiting had been a weary one, and it is impossible not to see that it had been hurtful to Bacon. A strong and able man, very eager to have a field for his strength and ability, who is kept out of it, as he thinks unfairly, and is driven to an attitude of suppliant dependency in pressing his claim on great persons who amuse him with words, can hardly help suffering in the humiliating process. It does a man no good to learn to beg, and to have a long training in the art. And further, this long delay kept up the distraction of his mind between the noble work on which his soul was bent, and the necessities of that "civil" or professional and political life by which he had to maintain his estate. All the time that he was "canvassing" (it is his own word) for office, and giving up his time and thoughts to the work which it involved, the great *Instauration* had to wait his hours of leisure; and his exclamation, so often repeated, *Multum incola fuit anima mea*, bears witness to the longings that haunted him in his hours of legal drudgery, or in the service of his not very thankful employers. Not but that he found compensation in the interest of public questions, in the company

of the great, in the excitement of state-craft and state employment, in the pomp and enjoyment of court life. He found too much compensation; it was one of his misfortunes. But his heart was always sound in its allegiance to knowledge; and if he had been fortunate enough to have risen earlier to the greatness which he aimed at as a vantage-ground for his true work, or if he had had self-control to have dispensed with wealth and position—if he had escaped the long necessity of being a persistent and still baffled suitor—we might have had as a completed whole what we have now only in great fragments, and we should have been spared the blots which mar a career which ought to have been a noble one.

The first important matter that happened after Bacon's new appointment was the Essex divorce case, and the marriage of Lady Essex with the favourite whom Cecil's death had left at the height of power, and who from Lord Rochester was now made Earl of Somerset. With the divorce, the beginning of the scandals and tragedies of James's reign, Bacon had nothing to do. At the marriage which followed Bacon presented as his offering a masque, performed by the members of Gray's Inn, of which he bore the charges, and which cost him the enormous sum of £2000. Whether it were to repay his obligations to the Howards, or in lieu of a "fee" to Rochester, who levied toll on all favours from the King, it can hardly be said, as has been suggested, to be a protest against the great abuse of the times, the sale of offices for money. The "very splendid trifle, the Masque of Flowers," was one form of the many extravagant tributes paid but too willingly to high-handed worthlessness, of which the deeper and darker guilt was to fill all faces with shame two years afterwards.

As Attorney, Bacon had to take a much more prominent

part in affairs, legal, criminal, constitutional, administrative, than he had yet been allowed to have. We know that it was his great object to show how much more active and useful an Attorney he could be than either Coke or Hobart; and as far as unflagging energy and high ability could make a good public servant, he fully carried out his purpose. In Parliament, the "addled Parliament" of 1614, in which he sat for the University of Cambridge, he did his best to reconcile what were fast becoming irreconcilable, the claims and prerogatives of an absolute king, irritable, suspicious, exacting, prodigal, with the ancient rights and liberties, growing stronger in their demands by being denied, resisted, or outwitted, of the popular element in the State. In the trials, which are so large and disagreeable a part of the history of these years—trials arising out of violent words provoked by the violent acts of power, one of which, Peacham's, became famous, because in the course of it torture was resorted to, or trials which witnessed to the corruption of the high society of the day, like the astounding series of arraignments and condemnations following on the discoveries relating to Overbury's murder, which had happened just before the Somerset marriage—Bacon had to make the best that he could for the cruel and often unequal policy of the Court; and Bacon must take his share in the responsibility for it. An effort on James's part to stop duelling brought from Bacon a worthier piece of service, in the shape of an earnest and elaborate argument against it, full of good sense and good feeling, but hopelessly in advance of the time. On the many questions which touched the prerogative, James found in his Attorney a ready and skilful advocate of his claims, who knew no limit to them but in the consideration of what was safe and prudent to assert. He was a better and more states-

manlike counsellor, in his unceasing endeavours to reconcile James to the expediency of establishing solid and good relations with his Parliament, and in his advice as to the wise and hopeful ways of dealing with it. Bacon had no sympathy with popular wants and claims; of popularity, of all that was called popular, he had the deepest suspicion and dislike; the opinions and the judgment of average men he despised, as a thinker, a politician, and a courtier; the "malignity of the people" he thought great. "I do not love," he says, "the word *people*." But he had a high idea of what was worthy of a king, and was due to the public interests, and he saw the folly of the petty acts and haughty words, the use of which James could not resist. In his new office he once more urged on, and urged in vain, his favourite project for revising, simplifying, and codifying the law. This was a project which would find little favour with Coke, and the crowd of lawyers who venerated him—men whom Bacon viewed with mingled contempt and apprehension both in the courts and in Parliament where they were numerous, and whom he more than once advised the King to bridle and keep "in awe." Bacon presented his scheme to the King in a Proposition, or, as we should call it, a Report. It is very able and interesting; marked with his characteristic comprehensiveness and sense of practical needs, and with a confidence in his own knowledge of law which contrasts curiously with the current opinion about it. He speaks with the utmost honour of Coke's work, but he is not afraid of a comparison with him. "I do assure your Majesty," he says, "I am in good hope that when Sir Edward Coke's Reports and my Rules and Decisions shall come to posterity, there will be (whatever is now thought) question who was the greater lawyer." But the project, though it was enter-

tained and discussed in Parliament, came to nothing. No one really cared about it except Bacon.

But in these years (1615 and 1616) two things happened of the utmost consequence to him. One was the rise, more extravagant than anything that England had seen for centuries, and in the end more fatal, of the new favourite, who from plain George Villiers became the all-powerful Duke of Buckingham. Bacon, like the rest of the world, saw the necessity of bowing before him; and Bacon persuaded himself that Villiers was pre-eminently endowed with all the gifts and virtues which a man in his place would need. We have a series of his letters to Villiers; they are of course in the complimentary vein which was expected; but if their language is only compliment, there is no language left for expressing what a man wishes to be taken for truth. The other matter was the humiliation, by Bacon's means and in his presence, of his old rival Coke. In the dispute about jurisdiction, always slumbering and lately awakened and aggravated by Coke, between the Common Law Courts and the Chancery, Coke had threatened the Chancery with *Præmunire*. The King's jealousy took alarm, and the Chief-Justice was called before the Council. There a decree, based on Bacon's advice and probably drawn up by him, peremptorily overruled the legal doctrine maintained by the greatest and most self-confident judge whom the English courts had seen. The Chief-Justice had to acquiesce in this reading of the law; and then, as if such an affront were not enough, Coke was suspended from his office, and, further, enjoined to review and amend his published reports, where they were inconsistent with the view of law which on Bacon's authority the Star Chamber had adopted (June, 1616). This he affected to

do, but the corrections were manifestly only colourable; his explanations of his legal heresies against the prerogative, as these heresies were formulated by the Chancellor and Bacon, and presented to him for recantation, were judged insufficient; and in a decree, prefaced by reasons drawn up by Bacon, in which, besides Coke's errors of law, his "deceit, contempt, and slander of the Government," his "perpetual turbulent carriage," and his affectation of popularity, were noted—he was removed from his office (Nov., 1616). So, for the present, the old rivalry had ended in a triumph for Bacon. Bacon, whom Coke had so long headed in the race, whom he had sneered at as a superficial pretender to law, and whose accomplishments and enthusiasm for knowledge he utterly despised, had not only defeated him, but driven him from his seat with dishonour. When we remember what Coke was, what he had thought of Bacon, and how he prized his own unique reputation as a representative of English law, the effects of such a disgrace on a man of his temper cannot easily be exaggerated.

But for the present Bacon had broken through the spell which had so long kept him back. He won a great deal of the King's confidence, and the King was more and more ready to make use of him, though by no means equally willing to think that Bacon knew better than himself. Bacon's view of the law, and his resources of argument and expression to make it good, could be depended upon in the keen struggle to secure and enlarge the prerogative which was now beginning. In the prerogative both James and Bacon saw the safety of the State and the only reasonable hope of good government; but in Bacon's larger and more elevated views of policy—of a policy worthy of a great king, and a king of England—James

was not likely to take much interest. The memorials which it was Bacon's habit to present on public affairs were wasted on one who had so little to learn from others—so he thought and so all assured him—about the secrets of empire. Still they were proofs of Bacon's ready mind; and James, even when he disagreed with Bacon's opinion and arguments, was too clever not to see their difference from the work of other men. Bacon rose in favour; and from the first he was on the best of terms with Villiers. He professed to Villiers the most sincere devotion. According to his custom he presented him with a letter of wise advice on the duties and behaviour of a favourite. He at once began, and kept up with him to the end, a confidential correspondence on matters of public importance. He made it clear that he depended upon Villiers for his own personal prospects, and it had now become the most natural thing that Bacon should look forward to succeeding the Lord Chancellor, Ellesmere, who was fast failing. Bacon had already (Feb. 12, 161 $\frac{5}{8}$), in terms which seem strange to us, but were less strange then, set forth in a letter to the King the reasons why he should be Chancellor; criticising justly enough, only that he was a party interested, the qualifications of other possible candidates, Coke, Hobart, and the Archbishop Abbott. Coke would be "an overruling nature in an overruling place," and "popular men were no sure mounters for your Majesty's saddle." Hobart was incompetent. As to Abbott, the Chancellor's place required "a whole man," and to have both jurisdiction, spiritual and temporal, "was fit only for a king." The promise that Bacon should have the place came to him three days afterwards through Villiers. He acknowledged it in a burst of gratitude (Feb. 15, 161 $\frac{5}{8}$). "I will now wholly rely on your excellent and happy

self. . . . I am yours surer to you than my own life. For, as they speak of the Turquoise stone in a ring, I will break into twenty pieces before you bear the least fall." They were unconsciously prophetic words. But Ellesmere lasted longer than was expected. It was not till a year after this promise that he resigned. On the 7th of March, 1617, Bacon received the seals. He expresses his obligations to Villiers, now Lord Buckingham, in the following letter:

"MY DEAREST LORD,—It is both in cares and kindness that small ones float up to the tongue, and great ones sink down into the heart with silence. Therefore I could speak little to your Lordship to-day, neither had I fit time; but I must profess thus much, that in this day's work you are the truest and perfectest mirror and example of firm and generous friendship that ever was in court. And I shall count every day lost, wherein I shall not either study your well-doing in thought, or do your name honour in speech, or perform you service in deed. Good my Lord, account and accept me your most bounden and devoted friend and servant of all men living,

"March 7, 1616 (i. e. 1617).

FR. BACON, C.S."

He himself believed the appointment to be a popular one. "I know I am come in," he writes to the King soon after, "with as strong an envy of some particulars as with the love of the general." On the 7th of May, 1617, he took his seat in Chancery with unusual pomp and magnificence, and set forth, in an opening speech, with all his dignity and force, the duties of his great office and his sense of their obligation. But there was a curious hesitation in treating him as other men were treated in like cases. He was only "Lord Keeper." It was not till the following January (1617) that he received the office of Lord Chancellor. It was not till half a year afterwards that he was made a Peer. Then he became Baron Verulam (July, 1618), and in January, 1629, Viscount St. Alban's.

From this time Bacon must be thought of, first and foremost, as a Judge in the great seat which he had so earnestly sought. It was the place not merely of law, which often tied the judge's hands painfully, but of true justice, when law failed to give it. Bacon's ideas of the duties of a judge were clear and strong, as he showed in various admirable speeches and charges: his duties as regards his own conduct and reputation; his duties in keeping his subordinates free from the taint of corruption. He was not ignorant of the subtle and unacknowledged ways in which unlawful gains may be covered by custom, and an abuse goes on because men will not choose to look at it. He entered on his office with the full purpose of doing its work better than it had ever been done. He saw where it wanted reforming, and set himself at once to reform. The accumulation and delay of suits had become grievous; at once he threw his whole energy into the task of wiping out the arrears which the bad health of his predecessor and the traditional sluggishness of the court had heaped up. In exactly three months from his appointment he was able to report that these arrears had been cleared off. "This day" (June 8, 1617), he writes to Buckingham, "I have made even with the business of the kingdom for common justice. Not one cause unheard. The lawyers drawn dry of all the motions they were to make. Not one petition unheard. And this I think could not be said in our time before."

The performance was splendid, and there is no reason to think that the work so rapidly done was not well done. We are assured that Bacon's decisions were unquestioned, and were not complained of. At the same time, before this allegation is accepted as conclusive proof of the public satisfaction, it must be remembered that the question

of his administration of justice, which was at last to assume such strange proportions, has never been so thoroughly sifted as, to enable us to pronounce upon it, it should be. The natural tendency of Bacon's mind would undoubtedly be to judge rightly and justly; but the negative argument of the silence at the time of complainants, in days when it was so dangerous to question authority, and when we have so little evidence of what men said at their firesides, is not enough to show that he never failed.

But the serious thing is that Bacon subjected himself to two of the most dangerous influences which can act on the mind of a judge—the influence of the most powerful and most formidable man in England, and the influence of presents, in money and other gifts. From first to last he allowed Buckingham, whom no man, as Bacon soon found, could displease except at his own peril, to write letters to him on behalf of suitors whose causes were before him; and he allowed suitors, not often while the cause was pending, but sometimes even then, to send him directly, or through his servants, large sums of money. Both these things are explained. It would have been characteristic of Bacon to be confident that he could defy temptation: these habits were the fashion of the time, and everybody took them for granted; Buckingham never asked his good offices beyond what Bacon thought just and right, and asked them rather for the sake of expedition than to influence his judgment. And as to the money presents—every office was underpaid; this was the common way of acknowledging pains and trouble: it was analogous to a doctor's or a lawyer's fee now. And there is no proof that either influence ever led Bacon to do wrong. This has been said, and said with some degree of force. But if it shows that Bacon was not in this matter below his age, it

shows that he was not above it. No one knew better than Bacon that there were no more certain dangers to honesty and justice than the interference and solicitation of the great, and the old famous pest of bribes, of which all histories and laws were full. And yet on the highest seat of justice in the realm he, the great reformer of its abuses, allowed them to make their customary haunt. He did not mean to do wrong: his conscience was clear; he had not given thought to the mischief they must do, sooner or later, to all concerned with the Court of Chancery. With a magnificent carelessness he could afford to run safely a course closely bordering on crime, in which meaner men would sin and be ruined.

Before six months were over Bacon found on what terms he must stand with Buckingham. By a strange fatality, quite unintentionally, he became dragged into the thick of the scandalous and grotesque dissensions of the Coke family. The Court was away from London in the North; and Coke had been trying, not without hope of success, to recover the King's favour. Coke was a rich man, and Lady Compton, the mother of the Villiers, thought that Coke's daughter would be a good match for one of her younger sons. It was really a great chance for Coke; but he haggled about the portion; and the opportunity, which might perhaps have led to his taking Bacon's place, passed. But he found himself in trouble in other ways; his friends, especially Secretary Winwood, contrived to bring the matter on again, and he consented to the Villiers's terms. But his wife, the young lady's mother, Lady Hatton, would not hear of it, and a furious quarrel followed. She carried off her daughter into the country. Coke, with a warrant from Secretary Winwood, which Bacon had refused to give him, pursued her: "with his son, 'Fighting Clem,' and ten or eleven

servants, weaponed, in a violent manner he repaired to the house where she was remaining, and with a piece of timber or form broke open the door and dragged her along to his coach." Lady Hatton rushed off the same afternoon for help to Bacon.

After an overturn by the way, "at last to my Lord Keeper's they come, but could not have instant access to him, for that his people told them he was laid at rest, being not well. Then my La. Hatton desired she might be in the next room where my Lord lay, that she might be the first that [should] speak with him after he was stirring. The door-keeper fulfilled her desire, and in the meantime gave her a chair to rest herself in, and there left her alone; but not long after, she rose up and bounced against my Lord Keeper's door, and waked him and affrighted him, that he called his men to him; and they opening the door, she thrust in with them, and desired his Lp. to pardon her boldness, but she was like a cow that had lost her calf, and so justified [herself] and pacified my Lord's anger, and got his warrant and my Lo. Treasurer's warrant and others of the Council to fetch her daughter from the father and bring them both to the Council."

It was a chance that the late Chief-Justice and his wife, with their armed parties, did not meet on the road, in which case "there were like to be strange tragedies." At length the Council compelled both sides to keep the peace, and the young lady was taken for the present out of the hands of her raging parents. Bacon had assumed that the affair was the result of an intrigue between Winwood and Coke, and that the Court would take part against Coke, a man so deep in disgrace and so outrageously violent. Supposing that he had the ear of Buckingham, he wrote earnestly, persuading him to put an end to the business; and in the meantime the Council ordered Coke to be brought before the Star Chamber "for riot and force," to "be heard and sentenced as justice shall appertain." They had not the slightest

doubt that they were doing what would please the King. A few days after they met, and then they learned the truth.

"Coke and his friends," writes Chamberlain, "complain of hard measure from some of the greatest at that board, and that he was too much trampled upon with ill language. And our friend [*i. e.* Winwood] passed out scot free for the warrant, which the greatest [*word illegible*] there said was subject to a *præmunire*; and withal told the Lady Compton that they wished well to her and her sons, and would be ready to serve the Earl of Buckingham with all true affection, whereas others did it out of faction and ambition—which words glancing directly at our good friend (Winwood), he was driven to make his apology, and to show how it was put upon him from time to time by the Queen and other parties; and, for conclusion, showed a letter of approbation of all his courses from the King, making the whole table judge what faction and ambition appeared in this carriage. *Ad quod non fuit responsum.*"

None indeed, but blank faces, and thoughts of what might come next. The Council, and Bacon foremost, had made a desperate mistake. "It is evident," as Mr. Spedding says, "that he had not divined Buckingham's feelings on the subject." He was now to learn them. To his utter amazement and alarm he found that the King was strong for the match, and that the proceeding of the Council was condemned at Court as gross misconduct. In vain he protested that he was quite willing to forward the match; that in fact he had helped it. Bacon's explanations, and his warnings against Coke the King "rejected with some disdain;" he justified Coke's action; he charged Bacon with disrespect and ingratitude to Buckingham; he put aside his arguments and apologies as worthless or insincere. Such reprimands had not often been addressed, even to inferior servants. Bacon's letters to Buckingham remained at first without notice; when Buckingham answered he did so with scornful and men-

acing curtness. Meanwhile Bacon heard from Yelverton how things were going at Court.

"Sir E. Coke," he wrote, "hath not forborne by any engine to heave at both your Honour and myself, and he works the weightiest instrument, the Earl of Buckingham, who, as I see, sets him as close to him as his shirt, the Earl speaking in Sir Edward's phrase, and as it were menacing in his spirit."

Buckingham, he went on to say, "did nobly and plainly tell me he would not secretly bite, but whosoever had had any interest, or tasted of the opposition to his brother's marriage, he would as openly oppose them to their faces, and they should discern what favour he had by the power he would use." The Court, like a pack of dogs, had set upon Bacon. "It is too common in every man's mouth in Court that your greatness shall be abated, and as your tongue hath been as a razor unto some, so shall theirs be to you." Buckingham said to every one that Bacon had been forgetful of his kindness and unfaithful to him: "not forbearing in open speech to tax you, as if it were an inveterate custom with you, to be unfaithful unto him, as you were to the Earls of Essex and Somerset."

All this while Bacon had been clearly in the right. He had thrust himself into no business that did not concern him. He had not, as Buckingham accuses him of having done, "overtroubled" himself with the marriage. He had done his simple duty as a friend, as a councillor, as a judge. He had been honestly zealous for the Villiers's honour, and warned Buckingham of things that were beyond question. He had curbed Coke's scandalous violence, perhaps with no great regret, but with manifest reason. But for this he was now on the very edge of losing his office; it was clear to him, as it is clear to us, that nothing could save him but absolute submission. He

accepted the condition. How this submission was made and received, and with what gratitude he found that he was forgiven, may be seen in the two following letters. Buckingham thus extends his grace to the Lord Keeper, and exhorts him to better behaviour:

"But his Majesty's direction in answer of your letter hath given me occasion to join hereunto a discovery unto you of mine inward thoughts, proceeding upon the discourse you had with me this day. For I do freely confess that your offer of submission unto me, and in writing (if so I would have it), battered so the unkindness that I had conceived in my heart for your behaviour towards me in my absence, as out of the sparks of my old affection towards you I went to sound his Majesty's intention how he means to behave himself towards you, specially in any public meeting; where I found on the one part his Majesty so little satisfied with your late answer unto him, which he counted (for I protest I use his own terms) *confused and childish*, and his vigorous resolution on the other part so fixed, that he would put some public exemplary mark upon you, as I protest the sight of his deep-conceived indignation quenched my passion, making me upon the instant change from the person of a party into a peace-maker; so as I was forced upon my knees to beg of his Majesty that he would put no public act of disgrace upon you, and, as I dare say, no other person would have been patiently heard in this suit by his Majesty but myself, so did I (though not without difficulty) obtain thus much—that he would not so far disable you from the merit of your future service as to put any particular mark of disgrace upon your person. Only thus far his Majesty protesteth, that upon the conscience of his office he cannot omit (though laying aside all passion) to give a kingly reprimand at his first sitting in council to so many of his councillors as were then here behind, and were actors in this business, for their ill behaviour in it. Some of the particular errors committed in this business he will name, but without accusing any particular persons by name.

"Thus your Lordship seeth the fruits of my natural inclination; and I protest all this time past it was no small grief unto me to hear the mouth of so many upon this occasion open to load you with innumerable malicious and detracting speeches, as if no music were

more pleasing to my ears than to rail of you, which made me rather regret the ill nature of mankind, that like dogs love to set upon him that they see once snatched at. And to conclude, my Lord, you have hereby a fair occasion so to make good hereafter your reputation by your sincere service to his Majesty, as also by your firm and constant kindness to your friends, as I may (your Lordship's old friend) participate of the comfort and honour that will thereby come to you. Thus I rest at last

"Your Lordship's faithful friend and servant,

"G. B."

"MY EVER BEST LORD, now better than yourself,—Your Lordship's pen, or rather pencil, hath pourtrayed towards me such magnanimity and nobleness and true kindness, as methinketh I see the image of some ancient virtue, and not anything of these times. It is the line of my life, and not the lines of my letter, that must express my thankfulness; wherein if I fail, then God fail me, and make me as miserable as I think myself at this time happy by this reviver, through his Majesty's singular clemency, and your incomparable love and favour. God preserve you, prosper you, and reward you for your kindness to

"Your raised and infinitely obliged friend and servant,

"Sept. 22, 1617.

FR. BACON, C.S."

Thus he had tried his strength with Buckingham. He had found that this, "a little parent-like" manner of advising him, and the doctrine that a true friend "ought rather to go against his mind than his good," was not what Buckingham expected from him. And he never ventured on it again. It is not too much to say that a man who could write as he now did to Buckingham, could not trust himself in any matter in which Buckingham was interested.

But the reconciliation was complete, and Bacon took his place more and more as one of the chief persons in the Government. James claimed so much to have his own way, and had so little scruple in putting aside, in his

superior wisdom, sometimes very curtly, Bacon's or any other person's recommendations, that though his services were great, and were not unrecognised, he never had the power and influence in affairs to which his boundless devotion to the Crown, his grasp of business, and his willing industry, ought to have entitled him. He was still a servant, and made to feel it, though a servant in the "first form." It was James and Buckingham who determined the policy of the country, or settled the course to be taken in particular transactions; when this was settled, it was Bacon's business to carry it through successfully. In this he was like all the other servants of the Crown, and like them he was satisfied with giving his advice, whether it were taken or not; but unlike many of them he was zealous in executing with the utmost vigour and skill the instructions which were given him. Thus he was required to find the legal means for punishing Raleigh; and, as a matter of duty, he found them. He was required to tell the Government side of the story of Raleigh's crimes and punishment—which really was one side of the story, only not by any means the whole; and he told it, as he had told the Government story against Essex, with force, moderation, and good sense. Himself, he never would have made James's miserable blunders about Raleigh; but the blunders being made, it was his business to do his best to help the King out of them. When Suffolk, the Lord Treasurer, was disgraced and brought before the Star Chamber for corruption and embezzlement in his office, Bacon thought that he was doing no more than his duty in keeping Buckingham informed day by day how the trial was going on; how he had taken care that Suffolk's submission should not stop it—"for all would be but a play on the stage if justice went not on in the right course;" how he had taken care that

the evidence went well—"I will not say I sometime help it, as far as was fit for a judge;" how, "a little to warm the business" . . . "I spake a word, that he that did draw or milk treasure from Ireland, did not, *emulgere*, milk money, but blood." This, and other "little things" like it, while he was sitting as a judge to try, if the word may be used, a personal enemy of Buckingham, however bad the case might be against Suffolk, sound strange indeed to us; and not less so when, in reporting the sentence and the various opinions of the Council about it, he, for once, praises Coke for the extravagance of his severity: "Sir Edward Coke did his part—I have not heard him do better—and began with a fine of £100,000; but the judges first, and most of the rest, reduced it to £30,000. I do not dislike that thing passed moderately; and all things considered, it is not amiss, and might easily have been worse."

In all this, which would have been perfectly natural from an Attorney-General of the time, Bacon saw but his duty, even as a judge between the Crown and the subject. It was what was expected of those whom the King chose to employ, and whom Buckingham chose to favour. But a worse and more cruel case, illustrating the system which a man like Bacon could think reasonable and honourable, was the disgrace and punishment of Yelverton, the Attorney-General, the man who had stood by Bacon, and in his defence had faced Buckingham, knowing well Buckingham's dislike of himself, when all the Court turned against Bacon in his quarrel with Coke and Lady Compton. Towards the end of the year 1620, on the eve of a probable meeting of Parliament, there was great questioning about what was to be done about certain patents and monopolies—monopolies for making gold and silk thread, and for licensing inns and ale-houses—which were in the hands of Buck-

ingham's brothers and their agents. The monopolies were very unpopular; there was always doubt as to their legality; they were enforced oppressively and vexatiously by men like Michell and Mompesson, who acted for the Villiers; and the profits of them went, for the most part, not into the Exchequer, but into the pockets of the hangers-on of Buckingham. Bacon defended them both in law and policy, and his defence is thought by Mr. Gardiner to be not without grounds; but he saw the danger of obstinacy in maintaining what had become so hateful in the country, and strongly recommended that the more indefensible and unpopular patents should be spontaneously given up, the more so as they were of "no great fruit." But Buckingham's insolent perversity "refused to be convinced." The Council, when the question was before them, decided to maintain them. Bacon, who had rightly voted in the minority, thus explains his own vote to Buckingham: "The King did wisely put it upon and consult, whether the patents were at this time to be removed by Act of Council before Parliament. *I opined (but yet somewhat like Ovid's mistress, that strove, but yet as one that would be overcome), that yes!*" But in the various disputes which had arisen about them, Yelverton had shown that he very much disliked the business of defending monopolies, and sending London citizens to jail for infringing them. He did it, but he did it grudgingly. It was a great offence in a man whom Buckingham had always disliked; and it is impossible to doubt that what followed was the consequence of his displeasure.

"In drawing up a new charter for the city of London," writes Mr. Gardiner, "Yelverton inserted clauses for which he was unable to produce a warrant. The worst that could be said was that he had, through inadvertence, misunderstood the verbal directions of the

King. Although no imputation of corruption was brought against him, yet he was suspended from his office, and prosecuted in the Star Chamber. He was then sentenced to dismissal from his post, to a fine of £4000, and to imprisonment during the Royal pleasure."

In the management of this business Bacon had the chief part. Yelverton, on his suspension, at once submitted. The obnoxious clauses are not said to have been of serious importance, but they were new clauses which the King had not sanctioned, and it would be a bad precedent to pass over such unauthorised additions even by an Attorney-General. "I mistook many things," said Yelverton afterwards, in words which come back into our minds at a later period, "I was improvident in some things, and too credulous in all things." It might have seemed that dismissal, if not a severe reprimand, was punishment enough. But the submission was not enough, in Bacon's opinion, "for the King's honour." He dwelt on the greatness of the offence, and the necessity of making a severe example. According to his advice, Yelverton was prosecuted in the Star Chamber. It was not merely a mistake of judgment. "Herein," said Bacon, "I note the wisdom of the law of England, which termeth the highest contempt and excesses of authority *Misprisions*; which (if you take the sound and derivation of the word) is but *mistaken*; but if you take the use and acception of the word, it is high and heinous contempt and usurpation of authority; whereof the reason I take to be and the name excellently imposed, for that main mistaking, it is ever joined with contempt; for he that reveres will not easily mistake; but he that slights, and thinks more of the greatness of his place than of the duty of his place, will soon commit misprisions." The day would come when this doctrine would be pressed with ruinous effect against Bacon himself. But now he

expounded with admirable clearness the wrongness of carelessness about warrants and of taking things for granted. He acquitted his former colleague of "corruption of reward;" but "in truth that makes the offence rather divers than less;" for some offences "are black, and others scarlet, some sordid, some presumptuous." He pronounced his sentence—the fine, the imprisonment; "for his place, I declare him unfit for it." "And the next day," says Mr. Spedding, "he reported to Buckingham the result of the proceeding," and takes no small credit for his own part in it.

It was thus that the Court used Bacon, and that Bacon submitted to be used. He could have done, if he had been listened to, much nobler service. He had from the first seen, and urged as far as he could, the paramount necessity of retrenchment in the King's profligate expenditure. Even Buckingham had come to feel the necessity of it at last; and now that Bacon filled a seat at the Council, and that the prosecution of Suffolk and an inquiry into the abuses of the Navy had forced on those in power the urgency of economy, there was a chance of something being done to bring order into the confusion of the finances. Retrenchment began at the King's kitchen and the tables of his servants; an effort was made, not unsuccessfully, to extend it wider, under the direction of Lionel Cranfield, a self-made man of business from the city; but with such a Court the task was an impossible one. It was not Bacon's fault, though he sadly mismanaged his own private affairs, that the King's expenditure was not managed soberly and wisely. Nor was it Bacon's fault, as far as advice went, that James was always trying either to evade or to outwit a Parliament which he could not, like the Tudors, overawe. Bacon's uniform counsel had been—Look on a Parliament as a certain necessity, but not only

as a necessity, as also a unique and most precious means for uniting the Crown with the nation, and proving to the world outside how Englishmen love and honour their King, and their King trusts his subjects. Deal with it frankly and nobly as becomes a king, not suspiciously like a huckster in a bargain. Do not be afraid of Parliament. Be skilful in calling it, but don't attempt to "pack" it. Use all due adroitness and knowledge of human nature, and necessary firmness and majesty, in managing it; keep unruly and mischievous people in their place, but do not be too anxious to meddle—"let nature work;" and above all, though of course you want money from it, do not let that appear as the chief or real cause of calling it. Take the lead in legislation. Be ready with some interesting or imposing points of reform or policy, about which you ask your Parliament to take counsel with you. Take care to "frame and have ready some commonwealth bills, that may add respect to the King's government and acknowledgment of his care; not *wooing* bills to make the King and his graces cheap, but good matter to set the Parliament on work, that an empty stomach do not feed on humour." So from the first had Bacon always thought; so he thought when he watched, as a spectator, James's blunders with his first Parliament of 1604; so had he earnestly counselled James, when admitted to his confidence, as to the Parliaments of 1614 and 1615; so again, but in vain, as Chancellor, he advised him to meet the Parliament of 1620. It was wise, and from his point of view honest advice, though there runs all through it too much reliance on appearances which were not all that they seemed; there was too much thought of throwing dust in the eyes of troublesome and inconvenient people. But whatever motives there might have been behind, it would have been

well if James had learned from Bacon how to deal with Englishmen. But he could not. "I wonder," said James one day to Gondomar, "that my ancestors should ever have permitted such an institution as the House of Commons to have come into existence. I am a stranger, and found it here when I arrived, so that I am obliged to put up with what I cannot get rid of." James was the only one of our many foreign kings who, to the last, struggled to avoid submitting himself to the conditions of an English throne.

CHAPTER VI.

BACON'S FALL.

WHEN Parliament met on January 30, 1629, and Bacon, as Lord Chancellor, set forth in his ceremonial speeches to the King and to the Speaker the glories and blessings of James's reign, no man in England had more reason to think himself fortunate. He had reached the age of sixty, and had gained the object of his ambition. More than that, he was conscious that in his great office he was finding full play for his powers and his high public purposes. He had won greatly on the confidence of the King. He had just received a fresh mark of honour from him: a few days before he had been raised a step in the peerage, and he was now Viscount St. Alban's. With Buckingham he seemed to be on terms of the most affectionate familiarity, exchanging opinions freely with him on every subject. And Parliament met in good-humour. They voted money at once. One of the matters which interested Bacon most—the revision of the Statute Book—they took up as one of their first measures, and appointed a Select Committee to report upon it. And what, amid the apparent felicity of the time, was of even greater personal happiness to Bacon, the first step of the "Great Instauration" had been taken. During the previous autumn, Oct. 12, 1620, the *Novum Organum*, the first instalment of his vast design,

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was published, the result of the work of thirty years; and copies were distributed to great people, among others to Coke. He apprehended no evil; he had nothing to fear, and much to hope from the times.

His sudden and unexpected fall, so astonishing and so irreparably complete, is one of the strangest events of that still imperfectly comprehended time. There had been, and were still to be, plenty of instances of the downfall of power, as ruinous and even more tragic, though scarcely any one more pathetic in its surprise and its shame. But it is hard to find one of which so little warning was given, and the causes of which are at once in part so clear, and in part so obscure and unintelligible. Such disasters had to be reckoned upon as possible chances by any one who ventured into public life. Montaigne advises that the discipline of pain should be part of every boy's education, for the reason that every one in his day might be called upon to undergo the torture. And so every public man, in the England of the Tudors and Stuarts, entered on his career with the perfectly familiar expectation of possibly closing it—it might be in an honourable and ceremonious fashion, in the Tower and on the scaffold—just as he had to look forward to the possibility of closing it by small-pox or the plague. So that when disaster came, though it might be unexpected, as death is unexpected, it was a turn of things which ought not to take a man by surprise. But some premonitory signs usually gave warning. There was nothing to warn Bacon that the work which he believed he was doing so well would be interrupted.

We look in vain for any threatenings of the storm. What the men of his time thought and felt about Bacon it is not easy to ascertain. Appearances are faint and contradictory; he himself, though scornful of judges who

sought to be "popular," believed that he "came in with the favour of the general;" that he "had a little popular reputation, which followeth me whether I will or no." No one for years had discharged the duties of his office with greater efficiency. Scarcely a trace remains of any suspicion, previous to the attack upon him, of the justice of his decisions; no instance was alleged that, in fact, impure motives had controlled the strength and lucidity of an intellect which loved to be true and right for the mere pleasure of being so. Nor was there anything in Bacon's political position to make him specially obnoxious above all others of the King's Council. He maintained the highest doctrines of prerogative; but they were current doctrines, both at the Council board and on the bench; and they were not discredited nor extinguished by his fall. To be on good terms with James and Buckingham meant a degree of subservience which shocks us now; but it did not shock people then, and he did not differ from his fellows in regarding it as part of his duty as a public servant of the Crown. No doubt he had enemies—some with old grudges like Southampton, who had been condemned with Essex; some like Suffolk, smarting under recent reprimands and the biting edge of Bacon's tongue; some like Coke, hating him from constitutional antipathies and the strong antagonism of professional doctrines, for a long course of rivalry and for mortifying defeats. But there is no appearance of preconceived efforts among them to bring about his overthrow. He did not at the time seem to be identified with anything dangerous or odious. There was no doubt a good deal of dissatisfaction with Chancery—among the common lawyers, because it interfered with their business; in the public, partly from the traditions of its slowness, partly from its expensiveness,

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partly because, being intended for special redress of legal hardship, it was sure to disappoint one party to a suit. But Bacon thought that he had reformed Chancery. He had also done a great deal to bring some kind of order, or at least hopefulness of order, into the King's desperate finances. And he had never set himself against Parliament. On the contrary, he had always been forward to declare that the King could not do without Parliament, and that Parliament only needed to be dealt with generously, and as "became a King," to be not a danger and hindrance to the Crown but its most sincere and trustworthy support.

What was then to portend danger to Bacon when the Parliament of 1624 met? The House of Commons at its meeting was thoroughly loyal and respectful; it meant to be *benedictum et pacificum parliamentum*. Every one knew that there would be "grievances" which would not be welcome to the Court, but they did not seem likely to touch him. Every one knew that there would be questions raised about unpopular patents and oppressive monopolies, and about their legality; and it was pretty well agreed upon at Court that they should be given up as soon as complained of. But Bacon was not implicated more than the Crown lawyers before him, in what all the Crown lawyers had always defended. There was dissatisfaction about the King's extravagance and wastefulness, about his indecision in the cause of the Elector Palatine, about his supposed intrigues with Papistical and tyrannical Spain; but Bacon had nothing to do with all this except, as far as he could, to give wise counsel and warning. The person who made the King despised and hated was the splendid and insolent favourite, Buckingham. It might have been thought that the one thing to be set against much that

was wrong in the State was the just and enlightened and speedy administration of equity in the Chancery.

When Parliament met, though nothing seemed to threaten mischief, it met with a sturdy purpose of bringing to account certain delinquents whose arrogance and vexations of the subjects had provoked the country, and who were supposed to shelter themselves under the countenance of Buckingham. Michell and Mompesson were rascals whose misdemeanors might well try the patience of a less spirited body than an English House of Commons. Buckingham could not protect them, and hardly tried to do so. But just as one electric current "induces" another by neighbourhood, so all this deep indignation against Buckingham's creatures created a fierce temper of suspicion about corruption all through the public service. Two Committees were early appointed by the House of Commons: one a Committee on Grievances, such as the monopolies; the other, a Committee to inquire into abuses in the Courts of Justice and receive petitions about them. In the course of the proceedings, the question arose in the House as to the authorities or "referees" who had certified to the legality of the Crown patents or grants which had been so grossly abused; and among these "referees" were the Lord Chancellor and other high officers, both legal and political.

It was the little cloud. But lookers-on like Chamberlain did not think much of it. "The referees," he wrote on Feb. 29th, "who certified the legality of the patents are glanced at, but they are chiefly above the reach of the House; they attempt so much that they will accomplish little." Coke, who was now the chief leader in Parliament, began to talk ominously of precedents, and to lay down rules about the power of the House to punish—

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rules which were afterwards found to have no authority for them. Cranfield, the representative of severe economy, insisted that the honour of the King required that the referees, whoever they were, should be called to account. The gathering clouds shifted a little, when the sense of the House seemed to incline to giving up all retrospective action, and to a limitation for the future by statute of the questionable prerogative—a limitation which was in fact attempted by a bill thrown out by the Lords. But they gathered again when the Commons determined to bring the whole matter before the House of Lords. The King wrote to warn Bacon of what was coming. The proposed conference was staved off by management for a day or two, but it could not be averted, and the Lords showed their eagerness for it. And two things by this time—the beginning of March—seemed now to have become clear, first, that under the general attack on the referees was intended a blow against Bacon; next, that the person whom he had most reason to fear was Sir Edward Coke.

The storm was growing; but Bacon was still unalarmed, though Buckingham had been frightened into throwing the blame on the referees.

"I do hear," he writes to Buckingham (dating his letter on March 7th, "the day I received the seal"), "from divers of judgement, that tomorrow's conference is like to pass in a calm, as to the referees. Sir Lionel Cranfield, who hath been formerly the trumpet, said yesterday that he did now incline unto Sir John Walter's opinion and motion not to have the referees meddled with, otherwise than to discount it from the King; and so not to look back, but to the future. And I do hear almost all men of judgement in the House wish now that way. I woo nobody; I do but listen, and I have doubt only of Sir Edward Coke, who I wish had some round *caveat* given him from the King; for your Lordship hath no great power with him. But a word from the King mates him."

But Coke's opportunity had come. The House of Commons was disposed for gentler measures. But he was able to make it listen to his harsher counsels, and from this time his hand appears in all that was done. The first conference was a tame and dull one. The spokesmen had been slack in their disagreeable and perhaps dangerous duty. But Coke and his friends took them sharply to task. "The heart and tongue of Sir Edward Coke are true relations," said one of his fervent supporters; "but his pains hath not reaped that harvest of praise that he hath deserved. For the referees, they are as transcendent delinquents as any other, and sure their souls made a wilful elopement from their bodies when they made these certificates." A second conference was held with the Lords, and this time the charge was driven home. The referees were named, the Chancellor at the head of them. When Bacon rose to explain and justify his acts he was sharply stopped, and reminded that he was transgressing the orders of the House in speaking till the Committees were named to examine the matter. What was even more important, the King had come to the House of Lords (March 10th), and frightened, perhaps, about his subsidies, told them "that he was not guilty of those grievances which are now discovered, but that he grounded his judgement upon others who have misled him." The referees would be attacked, people thought, if the Lower House had courage.

All this was serious. As things were drifting, it seemed as if Bacon might have to fight the legal question of the prerogative in the form of a criminal charge, and be called upon to answer the accusation of being the minister of a crown which legal language pronounced absolute, and of a King who interpreted legal language to the letter; and further, to meet his accusers after the King himself had

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disavowed what his servant had done. What passed between Bacon and the King is confused and uncertain; but after his speech the King could scarcely have thought of interfering with the inquiry. The proceedings went on; Committees were named for the several points of inquiry; and Bacon took part in these arrangements. It was a dangerous position to have to defend himself against an angry House of Commons, led and animated by Coke and Cranfield. But though the storm had rapidly thickened, the charges against the referees were not against him alone. His mistake in law, if it was a mistake, was shared by some of the first lawyers and first councillors in England. There was a battle before him, but not a hopeless one. "*Modicæ fidei, quare dubitasti*," he writes about this time to an anxious friend.

But in truth the thickening storm had been gathering over his head alone. It was against him that the whole attack was directed; as soon as it took a different shape, the complaints against the other referees, such as the Chief-Justice, who was now Lord Treasurer, though some attempt was made to press them, were quietly dropped. What was the secret history of these weeks we do not know. But the result of Bacon's ruin was that Buckingham was saved. "As they speak of the Turquoise stone in a ring," Bacon had said to Buckingham when he was made Chancellor, "I will break into twenty pieces before you have the least fall." Without knowing what he pledged himself to, he was taken at his word.

At length the lightning fell. During the early part of March, while these dangerous questions were mooted about the referees, a Committee, appointed early in the session, had also been sitting on abuses in courts of justice, and as part of their business, an inquiry had been going on into

the ways of the subordinate officers of the Court of Chancery. Bacon had early (Feb. 17th) sent a message to the Committee courting full inquiry, "willingly consenting that any man might speak anything of his Court." On the 12th of March the chairman, Sir R. Philips, reported that he had in his hands "divers petitions, many frivolous and clamorous, many of weight and consequence." Cranfield, who presided over the Court of Wards, had quarrelled fiercely with the Chancery, where he said there was "neither Law, Equity, nor Conscience," and pressed the inquiry, partly, it may be, to screen his own Court, which was found fault with by the lawyers. Some scandalous abuses were brought to light in the Chancery. They showed that "Bacon was at fault in the art of government," and did not know how to keep his servants in order. One of them, John Churchill, an infamous forger of Chancery orders, finding things going hard with him, and "resolved," it is said, "not to sink alone," offered his confessions of all that was going on wrong in the Court. But on the 15th of March things took another turn. It was no longer a matter of doubtful constitutional law; no longer a question of slack discipline over his officers. To the astonishment, if not of the men of his own day, at least to the unexhausted astonishment of times following, a charge was suddenly reported from the Committee to the Commons against the Lord Chancellor, not of straining the prerogative, or of conniving at his servants' misdoings, but of being himself a corrupt and venal judge. Two suitors charged him with receiving bribes. Bacon was beginning to feel worried and anxious, and he wrote thus to Buckingham. At length he had begun to see the meaning of all these inquiries, and to what they were driving.

"MY VERY GOOD LORD,—Your Lordship spake of Purgatory. I am now in it, but my mind is in a calm, for my fortune is not my

felicity. I know I have clean hands and a clean heart, and I hope a clean house for friends or servants. But Job himself, or whosoever was the justest judge, by such hunting for matters against him as hath been used against me, may for a time seem foul, specially in a time when greatness is the mark and accusation is the game. And if this be to be a Chancellor, I think if the great seal lay upon Hounslow Heath nobody would take it up. But the King and your Lordship will, I hope, put an end to these miseries one way or other. And in troth that which I fear most is lest continual attendance and business, together with these cares, and want of time to do my weak body right this spring by diet and physie, will cast me down; and then it will be thought feigning or fainting. But I hope in God I shall hold out. God prosper you."

The first charges attracted others, which were made formal matters of complaint by the House of Commons. John Churchill, to save himself, was busy setting down cases of misdoing; and probably suitors of themselves became ready to volunteer evidence. But of this Bacon as yet knew nothing. He was at this time only aware that there were persons who were "hunting out complaints against him," that the attack was changed from his law to his private character; he had found an unfavourable feeling in the House of Lords; and he knew well enough what it was to have powerful enemies in those days when a sentence was often settled before a trial. To any one, such a state of things was as formidable as the first serious symptoms of a fever. He was uneasy, as a man might well be on whom the House of Commons had fixed its eye, and to whom the House of Lords had shown itself unfriendly. But he was as yet conscious of nothing fatal to his defence, and he knew that if false accusations could be lightly made they could also be exposed.

A few days after the first mention of corruption the Commons laid their complaints of him before the House

of Lords, and on the same day (March 19) Bacon, finding himself too ill to go to the House, wrote to the Peers by Buckingham, requesting them that as some "complaints of base bribery" had come before them, they would give him a fair opportunity of defending himself, and of cross-examining witnesses; especially begging, that considering the number of decrees which he had to make in a year—more than two thousand—and "the courses which had been taken in hunting out complaints against him," they would not let their opinion of him be affected by the mere number of charges that might be made. Their short verbal answer, moved by Southampton (March 20), that they meant to proceed by right rule of justice, and would be glad if he cleared his honour, was not encouraging. And now that the Commons had brought the matter before them, the Lords took it entirely into their own hands, appointing three Committees, and examining the witnesses themselves. New witnesses came forward every day with fresh cases of gifts and presents, "bribes" received by the Lord Chancellor. When Parliament rose for the Easter vacation (March 27—April 17), the Committees continued sitting. A good deal probably passed of which no record remains. When the Commons met again (April 17) Coke was full of gibes about *Instauratio Magna*—the true *Instauratio* was to restore laws—and two days after an Act was brought in for review and reversal of decrees in Courts of Equity. It was now clear that the case against Bacon had assumed formidable dimensions, and also a very strange, and almost monstrous shape. For the Lords, who were to be the judges, had by their Committees taken the matter out of the hands of the Commons, the original accusers, and had become themselves the prosecutors, collecting and arranging evidence, accepting or rejecting depositions, and

doing all that counsel or the committing magistrate would do preliminary to a trial. There appears to have been no cross-examining of witnesses on Bacon's behalf, or hearing witnesses for him—not unnaturally at this stage of business, when the prosecutors were engaged in making out their own case; but considering that the future judges had of their own accord turned themselves into the prosecutors, the unfairness was great. At the same time it does not appear that Bacon did anything to watch how things went in the Committees, which had his friends in them as well as his enemies, and are said to have been open courts. Towards the end of March, Chamberlain wrote to Carleton that "the Houses were working hard at cleansing out the Augæan stable of monopolies, and also extortions in Courts of Justice. The petitions against the Lord Chancellor were too numerous to be got through: his chief friends and brokers of bargains, Sir George Hastings and Sir Richard Young, and others attacked, are obliged to accuse him in their own defence, though very reluctantly. His ordinary bribes were £300, £400, and even £1000. . . . The Lords admit no evidence except on oath. One Churchill, who was dismissed from the Chancery Court for extortion, is the chief cause of the Chancellor's ruin."¹ Bacon was greatly alarmed. He wrote to Buckingham, who was "his anchor in these floods." He wrote to the King; he was at a loss to account for the "tempest that had come on him;" he could not understand what he had done to offend the country or Parliament; he had never "taken rewards to pervert justice, however he might be frail, and partake of the abuse of the time."

"Time hath been when I have brought unto you *genitum columbae*

¹ *Calendar of State Papers* (domestic), March 24, 1621.

from others. Now I bring it from myself. I fly unto your Majesty with the wings of a dove, which once within these seven days I thought would have carried me a higher flight.

"When I enter into myself, I find not the materials of such a tempest as is comen upon me. I have been (as your Majesty knoweth best) never author of any immoderate counsel, but always desired to have things carried *suavibus modis*. I have been no avaricious oppressor of the people. I have been no haughty or intolerable or hateful man, in my conversation or carriage. I have inherited no hatred from my father, but am a good patriot born. Whence should this be? For these are the things that use to raise dislikes abroad."

And he ended by entreating the King to help him :

"That which I thirst after, as the hart after the streams, is that I may know by my matchless friend [Buckingham] that presenteth to you this letter, your Majesty's heart (which is an *abyssus* of goodness, as I am an *abyssus* of misery) towards me. I have been ever your man, and counted myself but an usufructuary of myself, the property being yours; and now making myself an oblation to do with me as may best conduce to the honour of your justice, the honour of your mercy, and the use of your service, resting as

"Clay in your Majesty's gracious hands,

"FR. ST. ALBAN, Canc.

"March 25, 1621."

To the world he kept up an undismayed countenance: he went down to Gorhambury, attended by troops of friends. "This man," said Prince Charles, when he met his company, "scorns to go out like a snuff." But at Gorhambury he made his will, leaving "his name to the next ages and to foreign nations;" and he wrote a prayer, which is a touching evidence of his state of mind—

"Most gracious Lord God, my merciful Father, from my youth up, my Creator, my Redeemer, my Comforter. Thou (O Lord) soundest and searchest the depths and secrets of all hearts; thou knowedgest the upright of heart, thou judgest the hypocrite, thou ponderest men's

thoughts and doings as in a balance, thou measurest their intentions as with a line, vanity and crooked ways cannot be hid from thee.

"Remember (O Lord) how thy servant hath walked before thee; remember what I have first sought, and what hath been principal in mine intentions. I have loved thy assemblies, I have mourned for the divisions of thy Church, I have delighted in the brightness of thy sanctuary. This vine which thy right hand hath planted in this nation, I have ever prayed unto thee that it might have the first and the latter rain; and that it might stretch her branches to the seas and to the floods. The state and bread of the poor and oppressed have been precious in my eyes: I have hated all cruelty and hardness of heart; I have (though in a despised weed) procured the good of all men. If any have been mine enemies, I thought not of them; neither hath the sun almost set upon my displeasure; but I have been as a dove, free from superfluity of maliciousness. Thy creatures have been my books, but thy Scriptures much more. I have sought thee in the courts, fields, and gardens, but I have found thee in thy temples.

"Thousand have been my sins, and ten thousand my transgressions; but thy sanctifications have remained with me, and my heart, through thy grace, hath been an unquenched coal upon thy altar. O Lord, my strength, I have since my youth met with thee in all my ways, by thy fatherly compassions, by thy comfortable chastisements, and by thy most visible providence. As thy favours have increased upon me, so have thy corrections; so as thou hast been alway near me, O Lord; and ever as my worldly blessings were exalted, so secret darts from thee have pierced me; and when I have ascended before men, I have descended in humiliation before thee.

"And now when I thought most of peace and honour, thy hand is heavy upon me, and hath humbled me, according to thy former loving-kindness, keeping me still in thy fatherly school, not as a bastard, but as a child. Just are thy judgements upon me for my sins, which are more in number than the sands of the sea, but have no proportion to thy mercies; for what are the sands of the sea to the sea, earth, heavens? and all these are nothing to thy mercies.

"Besides my innumerable sins, I confess before thee that I am debtor to thee for the gracious talent of thy gifts and graces, which I have misspent in things for which I was least fit; so as I may truly say, my soul hath been a stranger in the course of my pilgrimage.

Be merciful unto me (O Lord) for my Saviour's sake, and receive me into thy bosom, or guide me in thy ways."

Bacon up to this time strangely, if the Committees were "open Courts," was entirely ignorant of the particulars of the charge which was accumulating against him. He had an interview with the King, which was duly reported to the House, and he placed his case before James, distinguishing between the "three cases of bribery supposed in a judge—a corrupt bargain; carelessness in receiving a gift while the cause is going on; and, what is innocent, receiving a gift after it is ended." And he meant in such words as these to place himself at the King's disposal, and ask his direction:

"For my fortune, *summa summarum* with me is, that I may not be made altogether unprofitable to do your Majesty service or honour. If your Majesty continue me as I am, I hope I shall be a new man, and shall reform things out of feeling, more than another can do out of example. If I cast part of my burden, I shall be more strong and *delivré* to bear the rest. And, to tell your Majesty what my thoughts run upon, I think of writing a story of England, and of recompiling of your laws into a better digest."

The King referred him to the House; and the House now (April 19th) prepared to gather up into "one brief" the charges against the Lord Chancellor, still, however, continuing open to receive fresh complaints.

Meanwhile the chase after abuses of all kinds was growing hotter in the Commons—abuses in patents and monopolies, which revived the complaints against referees, among whom Bacon was frequently named, and abuses in the Courts of Justice. The attack passed by and spared the Common Law Courts, as was noticed in the course of the debates; it spared Cranfield's Court, the Court of Wards. But it fell heavily on the Chancery and the Ec-

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clesiastical Courts. "I have neither power nor will to defend Chancery," said Sir John Bennett, the judge of the Prerogative Court; but a few weeks after his turn came, and a series of as ugly charges as could well be preferred against a judge, charges of extortion as well as bribery, were reported to the House by its Committee. There can be no doubt of the grossness of many of these abuses, and the zeal against them was honest, though it would have shown more courage if it had flown at higher game; but the daily discussion of them helped to keep alive and inflame the general feeling against so great a "delinquent" as the Lord Chancellor was supposed to be. And, indeed, two of the worst charges against him were made before the Commons. One was a statement made in the House by Sir George Hastings, a member of the House, who had been the channel of Awbry's gift, that when he had told Bacon that if questioned he must admit it, Bacon's answer was: "George, if you do so, I must deny it upon my honour—upon my oath." The other was that he had given an opinion in favour of some claim of the Masters in Chancery for which he received £1200, and with which he said that all the judges agreed—an assertion which all the judges denied. Of these charges there is no contradiction.¹

Bacon made one more appeal to the King (April 21). He hoped that, by resigning the seal, he might be spared the sentence:

"But now if not *per omnipotentiam* (as the divines speak), but *per potestatem suavitèr disponentem*, your Majesty will graciously save me from a sentence with the good liking of the House, and that cup may pass from me; it is the utmost of my desires.

¹ *Commons' Journals*, March 17, April 27; iii. 560, 594-6.

"This I move with the more belief, because I assure myself that if it be reformation that is sought, the very taking away the seal, upon my general submission, will be as much in example for these four hundred years as any further severity."

At length, informally, but for the first time distinctly, the full nature of the accusation, with its overwhelming list of cases, came to Bacon's knowledge (April 20 or 21). From the single charge, made in the middle of March, it had swelled in force and volume like a rising mountain torrent. That all these charges should have sprung out of the ground from their long concealment is strange enough. How is it that nothing was heard of them when the things happened? And what is equally strange is that these charges were substantially true and undeniable; that this great Lord Chancellor, so admirable in his despatch of business, hitherto so little complained of for wrong or unfair decisions, had been in the habit of receiving large sums of money from suitors, in some cases certainly while the suit was pending. And further, while receiving them, while perfectly aware of the evil of receiving gifts on the seat of judgment, while emphatically warning inferior judges against yielding to the temptation, he seems really to have continued unconscious of any wrong-doing while gift after gift was offered and accepted. But nothing is so strange as the way in which Bacon met the charges. Tremendous as the accusation was, he made not the slightest fight about it. Up to this time he had held himself innocent. Now, overwhelmed and stunned, he made no attempt at defence; he threw up the game without a struggle, and volunteered an absolute and unreserved confession of his guilt—that is to say, he declined to stand his trial. Only, he made an earnest application to the House of Lords, in proceeding to sen-

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tence, to be content with a general admission of guilt, and to spare him the humiliation of confessing the separate facts of alleged "bribery" which were contained in the twenty-eight Articles of his accusation. This submission, "grounded only on rumour," for the Articles of charge had not yet been communicated to him by the accusers, took the House by surprise. "No Lord spoke to it, after it had been read, for a long time." But they did not mean that he should escape with this. The House treated the suggestion with impatient scorn (April 24). "It is too late," said Lord Saye. "No word of confession of any corruption in the Lord Chancellor's submission," said Southampton; "it stands with the justice and honour of this House not to proceed without the parties' particular confession, or to have the parties to hear the charge, and we to hear the parties answer." The demand of the Lords was strictly just, but cruel; the Articles were now sent to him; he had been charged with definite offences; he must answer yes or no, confess them or defend himself. A further question arose whether he should not be sent for to appear at the bar. He still held the seals. "Shall the Great Seal come to the bar?" asked Lord Pembroke. It was agreed that he was to be asked whether he would acknowledge the particulars. His answer was "that he will make no manner of defence to the charge, but meaneth to acknowledge corruption, and to make a particular confession to every point, and after that a humble submission. But he humbly craves liberty that, when the charge is more full than he finds the truth of the fact, he may make a declaration of the truth in such particulars, the charge being brief and containing not all the circumstances." And such a confession he made. "My Lords," he said, to those who were sent to ask

whether he would stand to it, "it is my act, my hand, my heart. I beseech your Lordships be merciful to a broken reed." This was, of course, followed by a request to the King from the House to "sequester" the Great Seal. A commission was sent to receive it (May 1). "The worse, the better," he answered to the wish, "that it had been better with him." "By the King's great favour I received the Great Seal; by my own great fault I have lost it." They intended him now to come to the bar to receive his sentence. But he was too ill to leave his bed. They did not push this point farther, but proceeded to settle the sentence (May 3). He had asked for mercy, but he did not get it. There were men who talked of every extremity short of death. Coke, indeed, in the Commons, from his store of precedents, had cited cases where judges had been hanged for bribery. But the Lords would not hear of this. "His offences foul," said Lord Arundel; "his confession pitiful. Life not to be touched." But Southampton, whom twenty years before he had helped to involve in Essex's ruin, urged that he should be degraded from the peerage; and asked whether, at any rate, "he whom this House thinks unfit to be a constable shall come to the Parliament." He was fined £40,000. He was to be imprisoned in the Tower during the King's pleasure. He was to be incapable of any office, place, or employment in the State or Commonwealth. He was never to sit in Parliament or come within the verge of the Court. This was agreed to, Buckingham only dissenting. "The Lord Chancellor is so sick," he said, "that he cannot live long."

What is the history of this tremendous catastrophe by which, in less than two months, Bacon was cast down from the height of fortune to become a byword of shame? He had enemies, who certainly were glad, but there is no

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appearance that it was the result of any plot or combination against him. He was involved, accidentally, it may almost be said, in the burst of anger excited by the intolerable dealings of others. The indignation provoked by Michell and Mompesson and their associates at that particular moment found Bacon in its path, doing, as it seemed, in his great seat of justice, even worse than they; and when he threw up all attempt at defence, and his judges had his hand to an unreserved confession of corruption, both generally, and in the long list of cases alleged against him, it is not wonderful that they came to the conclusion, as the rest of the world did, that he was as bad as the accusation painted him—a dishonest and corrupt judge. Yet it is strange that they should not have observed that not a single charge of a definitely unjust decision was brought, at any rate was proved, against him. He had taken money, they argued, and therefore he must be corrupt; but if he had taken money to pervert judgment, some instance of the iniquity would certainly have been brought forward and proved. There is no such instance to be found; though, of course, there were plenty of dissatisfied suitors; of course the men who had paid their money and lost their cause were furious. But in vain do we look for any case of proved injustice. The utmost that can be said is that in some cases he showed favour in pushing forward and expediting suits. So that the real charge against Bacon assumes, to us who have not to deal practically with dangerous abuses, but to judge conduct and character, a different complexion. Instead of being the wickedness of perverting justice and selling his judgments for bribes, it takes the shape of allowing and sharing in a dishonourable and mischievous system of payment for

service, which could not fail to bring with it temptation and discredit, and in which fair reward could not be distinguished from unlawful gain. Such a system it was high time to stop; and in this rough and harsh way, which also satisfied some personal enmities, it was stopped. We may put aside for good the charge on which he was condemned, and which in words he admitted—of being corrupt as a judge. His real fault—and it was a great one—was that he did not in time open his eyes to the wrongness and evil, patent to every one, and to himself as soon as pointed out, of the traditional fashion in his court of eking out by irregular gifts the salary of such an office as his.

Thus Bacon was condemned both to suffering and to dishonour; and, as has been observed, condemned without a trial. But it must also be observed that it was entirely owing to his own act that he had not a trial, and with a trial the opportunity of cross-examining witnesses and of explaining openly the matters urged against him. The proceedings in the Lords were preliminary to the trial; when the time came, Bacon, of his own choice, stopped them from going farther by his confession and submission. Considering the view which he claimed to take of his own case, his behaviour was wanting in courage and spirit. From the moment that the attack on him shifted from a charge of authorising illegal monopolies to a charge of personal corruption, he never fairly met his accusers. The distress and anxiety, no doubt, broke down his health; and twice, when he was called upon to be in his place in the House of Lords, he was obliged to excuse himself on the ground that he was too ill to leave his bed. But between the time of the first charge and his condemnation seven weeks elapsed; and though he was able to go down to

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Gorhambury, he never in that time showed himself in the House of Lords. Whether or not, while the Committees were busy in collecting the charges, he would have been allowed to take part, to put questions to the witnesses, or to produce his own, he never attempted to do so; and by the course he took there was no other opportunity. To have stood his trial could hardly have increased his danger, or aggravated his punishment; and it would only have been worthy of his name and place, if not to have made a fight for his character and integrity, at least to have bravely said what he had made up his mind to admit, and what no one could have said more nobly and pathetically, in open Parliament. But he was cowed at the fierceness of the disapprobation manifest in both Houses. He shrunk from looking his peers and his judges in the face. His friends obtained for him that he should not be brought to the bar, and that all should pass in writing. But they saved his dignity at the expense of his substantial reputation. The observation that the charges against him were not sifted by cross-examination applies equally to his answers to them. The allegations of both sides would have come down to us in a more trustworthy shape if the case had gone on. But to give up the struggle, and to escape by any humiliation from a regular public trial, seems to have been his only thought when he found that the King and Buckingham could not or would not save him.

But the truth is that he knew that a trial of this kind was a trial only in name. He knew that, when a charge of this sort was brought, it was not meant to be really investigated in open court, but to be driven home by proofs carefully prepared beforehand, against which the accused had little chance. He knew, too, that in those days to resist in

earnest an accusation was apt to be taken as an insult to the court which entertained it. And further, for the prosecutor to accept a submission and confession without pushing to the formality of a public trial, and therefore a public exposure, was a favour. It was a favour which by his advice, as against the King's honour, had been refused to Suffolk; it was a favour which, in a much lighter charge, had by his advice been refused to his colleague Yelverton only a few months before, when Bacon, in sentencing him, took occasion to expatiate on the heinous guilt of misprisions or mistakes in men in high places. The humiliation was not complete without the trial, but it was for humiliation and not fair investigation that the trial was wanted. Bacon knew that the trial would only prolong his agony, and give a further triumph to his enemies.

That there was any plot against Bacon, and much more that Buckingham to save himself was a party to it, is of course absurd. Buckingham, indeed, was almost the only man in the Lords who said anything for Bacon, and, alone, he voted against his punishment. But considering what Buckingham was, and what he dared to do when he pleased, he was singularly cool in helping Bacon. Williams, the astute Dean of Westminster, who was to be Bacon's successor as Lord Keeper, had got his ear, and advised him not to endanger himself by trying to save delinquents. He did not. Indeed, as the inquiry went on, he began to take the high moral ground; he was snocked at the Chancellor's conduct; he would not have believed that it could have been so bad; his disgrace was richly deserved. Buckingham kept up appearances by saying a word for him from time to time in Parliament, which he knew would be useless, and which he certainly took no measures to make ef-

fective. It is sometimes said that Buckingham never knew what dissimulation was. He was capable, at least, of the perfidy and cowardice of utter selfishness. Bacon's conspicuous fall diverted men's thoughts from the far more scandalous wickedness of the great favourite. But though there was no plot, though the blow fell upon Bacon almost accidentally, there were many who rejoiced to be able to drive it home. We can hardly wonder that foremost among them was Coke. This was the end of the long rivalry between Bacon and Coke, from the time that Essex pressed Bacon against Coke in vain to the day when Bacon as Chancellor drove Coke from his seat for his bad law, and as Privy Councillor ordered him to be prosecuted in the Star Chamber for riotously breaking open men's doors to get his daughter. The two men thoroughly disliked and undervalued one another. Coke made light of Bacon's law. Bacon saw clearly Coke's narrowness and ignorance out of that limited legal sphere in which he was supposed to know everything, his prejudiced and interested use of his knowledge, his coarseness and insolence. But now in Parliament Coke was supreme, "our Hercules," as his friends said. He posed as the enemy of all abuses and corruption. He brought his unrivalled, though not always accurate, knowledge of law and history to the service of the Committees, and took care that the Chancellor's name should not be forgotten when it could be connected with some bad business of patent or Chancery abuse. It was the great revenge of the Common Law on the encroaching and insulting Chancery which had now proved so foul. And he could not resist the opportunity of marking the revenge of professional knowledge over Bacon's airs of philosophical superiority. "To restore things to their original" was his sneer in Par-

liament, "this, *Instauratio Magna. Instaurare paras—Instaura leges justitiamque prius.*"¹

The charge of corruption was as completely a surprise to Bacon as it was to the rest of the world. And yet, as soon as the blot was hit, he saw in a moment that his position was hopeless—he knew that he had been doing wrong; though all the time he had never apparently given it a thought, and he insisted, what there is every reason to believe, that no present had induced him to give an unjust decision. It was the power of custom over a character naturally and by habit too pliant to circumstances. Custom made him insensible to the evil of receiving recommendations from Buckingham in favour of suitors. Custom made him insensible to the evil of what it seems every one took for granted—receiving gifts from suitors. In the Court of James I. the atmosphere which a man in office breathed was loaded with the taint of gifts and bribes. Presents were as much the rule, as indispensable for those who hoped to get on, as they are now in Turkey. Even in Elizabeth's days, when Bacon was struggling to win her favour, and was in the greatest straits for money, he borrowed £500 to buy a jewel for the Queen. When he was James's servant the giving of gifts became a necessity. New Year's Day brought round its tribute of gold vases and gold pieces to the King and Buckingham.

¹ *Commons' Journals*, iii. 578. In his copy of the *Novum Organum*, received *ex dono auctoris*, Coke wrote the same words.

"*Auctori consilium.*

*Instaurare paras veterum documenta sophorum:
Instaura leges justitiamque prius.*"

He added, with allusion to the ship in the frontispiece of the *Novum Organum*,

"It deserveth not to be read in schools,
But to be freighted in the ship of Fools."

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And this was the least. Money was raised by the sale of officers and titles. For £20,000, having previously offered £10,000 in vain, the Chief-Justice of England, Montague, became Lord Mandeville and Treasurer. The bribe was sometimes disguised: a man became a Privy Councillor, like Cranfield, or a Chief-Justice, like Ley (afterwards "the good Earl," "unstained with gold or fee," of Milton's Sonnet); by marrying a cousin or a niece of Buckingham. When Bacon was made a Peer, he had also given him "the making of a Baron;" that is to say, he might raise money by bargaining with some one who wanted a peerage; when, however, later on, he asked Buckingham for a repetition of the favour, Buckingham gave him a lecture on the impropriety of prodigality, which should make it seem that "while the King was asking money of Parliament with one hand he was giving with the other." How things were in Chancery in the days of the Queen, and of Bacon's predecessors, we know little; but Bacon himself implies that there was nothing new in what he did. "All my lawyers," said James, "are so bred and nursed in corruption that they cannot leave it." Bacon's Chancellorship coincided with the full bloom of Buckingham's favour; and Buckingham set the fashion, beyond all before him, of extravagance in receiving and spending. Encompassed by such assumptions and such customs, Bacon administered the Chancery. Suitors did there what people did everywhere else; they acknowledged by a present the trouble they gave, or the benefit they gained. It may be that Bacon's known difficulties about money, his expensive ways and love of pomp, his easiness of nature, his lax discipline over his servants, encouraged this profuseness of giving. And Bacon let it be. He asked no questions; he knew that he worked

hard and well; he knew that it could go on without affecting his purpose to do justice "from the greatest to the groom." A stronger character, a keener conscience, would have faced the question, not only whether he was not setting the most ruinous of precedents, but whether any man could be so sure of himself as to go on dealing justly with gifts in his hands. But Bacon, who never dared to face the question, what James was, what Buckingham was, let himself be spellbound by custom. He knew in the abstract that judges ought to have nothing to do with gifts, and had said so impressively in his charges to them. Yet he went on self-complacent, secure, almost innocent, building up a great tradition of corruption in the very heart of English justice, till the challenge of Parliament, which began in him its terrible and relentless, but most unequal, prosecution of justice against ministers who had betrayed the commonwealth in serving the Crown, woke him from his dream, and made him see, as others saw it, the guilt of a great judge who, under whatever extenuating pretext, allowed the suspicion to arise that he might sell justice. "In the midst of a state of as great affliction as mortal man can endure," he wrote to the Lords of the Parliament, in making his submission, "I shall begin with the professing gladness in some things. The first is that hereafter the greatness of a judge or magistrate shall be no sanctuary or protection of guiltiness, which is the beginning of a golden world. The next, that after this example it is like that judges will fly from anything that is in the likeness of corruption as from a serpent." Bacon's own judgment on himself, deliberately repeated, is characteristic, and probably comes near the truth. "Howsoever, I acknowledge the sentence just and for reformation's sake fit," he writes to Buckingham from

the Tower, where, for form's sake, he was imprisoned for a few miserable days, he yet had been "the justest Chancellor that hath been in the five changes that have been since Sir Nicolas Bacon's time." He repeated the same thing yet more deliberately in later times. "*I was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years. But it was the justest censure in Parliament that was these two hundred years.*"

He might have gone on to add, "the Wisest Counsellor; and yet none on whom rested heavier blame; none of whom England might more justly complain." Good counsels given, submissive acquiescence in the worst—this is the history of his statesmanship. Bacon, whose eye was everywhere, was not sparing of his counsels. On all the great questions of the time he has left behind abundant evidence, not only of what he thought, but of what he advised. And in every case these memorials are marked with the insight, the independence, the breadth of view, and the moderation of a mind which is bent on truth. He started, of course, from a basis which we are now hardly able to understand or allow for, the idea of absolute royal power and prerogative which James had enlarged and hardened out of the Kingship of the Tudors, itself imperious and arbitrary enough, but always seeking, with a tact of which James was incapable, to be in touch and sympathy with popular feeling. But it was a basis which in principle every one of any account as yet held or professed to hold, and which Bacon himself held on grounds of philosophy and reason. He could see no hope for orderly and intelligent government except in a ruler whose wisdom had equal strength to assert itself; and he looked down with incredulity and scorn on the notion of anything good

coming out of what the world then knew or saw of popular opinion or parliamentary government. But when it came to what was wise and fitting for absolute power to do in the way of general measures and policy, he was for the most part right. He saw the inexorable and pressing necessity of putting the finance of the kingdom on a safe footing. He saw the necessity of a sound and honest policy in Ireland. He saw the mischief of the Spanish alliance in spite of his curious friendship with Gondomar, and detected the real and increasing weakness of the Spanish monarchy, which still awed mankind. He saw the growing danger of abuses in Church and State which were left untouched, and were protected by the punishment of those who dared to complain of them. He saw the confusion and injustice of much of that common law of which the lawyers were so proud; and would have attempted, if he had been able, to emulate Justinian, and anticipate the Code Napoleon, by a rational and consistent digest. Above all, he never ceased to impress on James the importance, and, if wisely used, the immense advantages, of his Parliaments. Himself, for great part of his life, an active and popular member of the House of Commons, he saw that not only it was impossible to do without it, but that, if fairly, honourably, honestly dealt with, it would become a source of power and confidence which would double the strength of the Government both at home and abroad. Yet of all this wisdom nothing came. The finance of the kingdom was still ruined by extravagance and corruption in a time of rapidly-developing prosperity and wealth. The wounds of Ireland were unhealed. It was neither peace nor war with Spain, and hot infatuation for its friendship alternated with cold fits of distrust and estrange-

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ment. Abuses flourished and multiplied under great patronage. The King's one thought about Parliament was how to get as much money out of it as he could, with as little other business as possible. Bacon's counsels were the prophecies of Cassandra in that so prosperous but so disastrous reign. All that he did was to lend the authority of his presence, in James's most intimate counsels, to policy and courses of which he saw the unwisdom and the perils. James and Buckingham made use of him when they wanted. But they would have been very different in their measures and their statesmanship if they had listened to him.

Mirabeau said, what of course had been said before him, "On ne vaut, dans la partie exécutive de la vie humaine, que par le caractère." This is the key to Bacon's failures as a judge and as a statesman, and why, knowing so much more and judging so much more wisely than James and Buckingham, he must be identified with the misdoings of that ignoble reign. He had the courage of his opinions; but a man wants more than that: he needs the manliness and the public spirit to enforce them, if they are true and salutary. But this is what Bacon had not. He did not mind being rebuffed; he knew that he was right, and did not care. But to stand up against the King, to contradict him after he had spoken, to press an opinion or a measure on a man whose belief in his own wisdom was infinite, to risk not only being set down as a dreamer, but the King's displeasure, and the ruin of being given over to the will of his enemies, this Bacon had not the fibre or the stiffness or the self-assertion to do. He did not do what a man of firm will and strength of purpose, a man of high integrity, of habitual resolution, would have done. Such men insist

when they are responsible, and when they know that they are right; and they prevail, or accept the consequences. Bacon, knowing all that he did, thinking all that he thought, was content to be the echo and the instrument of the cleverest, the foolishest, the vainest, the most pitifully unmanly of English kings.

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CHAPTER VII

BACON'S LAST YEARS.

[1621-1626.]

THE tremendous sentences of those days, with their crushing fines, were often worse in sound than in reality. They meant that for the moment a man was defeated and disgraced. But it was quite understood that it did not necessarily follow that they would be enforced in all their severity. The fine might be remitted the imprisonment shortened, the ban of exclusion taken off. At another turn of events or caprice the man himself might return to favour, and take his place in Parliament or the Council as if nothing had happened. But, of course, a man might have powerful enemies, and the sentence might be pressed. His fine might be assigned to some favourite; and he might be ruined, even if in the long run he was pardoned; or he might remain indefinitely a prisoner. Raleigh had remained to perish at last in dishonour. Northumberland, Raleigh's fellow-prisoner, after fifteen years' captivity, was released this year. The year after Bacon's condemnation such criminals as Lord and Lady Somerset were released from the Tower, after a six years' imprisonment. Southampton, the accomplice of Essex, Suffolk, sentenced as late as 1619 by Bacon for embezzlement, sat in the House of Peers which judged Bacon, and both of them took a prominent part in judging him.

To Bacon the sentence was ruinous. It proved an irretrievable overthrow as regards public life, and, though some parts of it were remitted and others lightened, it plunged his private affairs into trouble which weighed heavily on him for his few remaining years. To his deep distress and horror he had to go to the Tower to satisfy the terms of his sentence. "Good my Lord," he writes to Buckingham, May 31, "procure my warrant for my discharge this day. Death is so far from being unwelcome to me, as I have called for it as far as Christian resolution would permit any time these two months. But to die before the time of his Majesty's grace, in this disgraceful place, is even the worst that could be." He was released after two or three days, and he thanks Buckingham (June 4) for getting him out to do him and the King faithful service—"wherein, by the grace of God, your Lordship shall find that my adversity hath neither *spent* nor *pent* my spirits." In the autumn his fine was remitted—that is, it was assigned to persons nominated by Bacon, who, as the Crown had the first claim on all his goods, served as a protection against his other creditors, who were many and some of them clamorous—and it was followed by his pardon. His successor, Williams, now Bishop of Lincoln, who stood in great fear of Parliament, tried to stop the pardon. The assignment of the fine, he said to Buckingham, was a gross job—"it is much spoken against, not for the matter (for no man objects to that), but for the manner, which is full of knavery, and a wicked precedent. For by this assignment he is protected from all his creditors, which (I dare say) was neither his Majesty's nor your Lordship's meaning." It was an ill-natured and cowardly piece of official pedantry to plunge deeper a drowning man; but in the end the pardon was passed.

It does not appear whether Buckingham interfered to overrule the Lord Keeper's scruples. Buckingham was certainly about this time very much out of humour with Bacon, for a reason which, more than anything else, discloses the deep meanness which lurked under his show of magnanimity and pride. He had chosen this moment to ask Bacon for York House. This meant that Bacon would never more want it. Even Bacon was stung by such a request to a friend in his condition, and declined to part with it; and Buckingham accordingly was offended, and made Bacon feel it. Indeed, there is reason to think with Mr. Spedding that for the sealing of his pardon Bacon was indebted to the good offices with the King, not of Buckingham, but of the Spaniard, Gondomar, with whom Bacon had always been on terms of cordiality and respect, and who at this time certainly "brought about something on his behalf, which his other friends either had not dared to attempt or had not been able to obtain."

But, though Bacon had his pardon, he had not received permission to come within the verge of the Court, which meant that he could not live in London. His affairs were in great disorder, his health was bad, and he was cut off from books. He wrote an appeal to the Peers who had condemned him, asking them to intercede with the King for the enlargement of his liberty. "I am old," he wrote, "weak, ruined, in want, a very subject of pity." The Tower at least gave him the neighbourhood of those who could help him. "There I could have company, physicians, conference with my creditors and friends about my debts and the necessities of my estate, helps for my studies and the writings I have in hand. Here I live upon the sword-point of a sharp air, endangered if I go abroad, dulled if I stay within, solitary and comfortless, without company,

banished from all opportunities to treat with any to do myself good, and to help out my wrecks." If the Lords would recommend his suit to the King, "You shall do a work of charity and nobility, you shall do me good, you shall do my creditors good, and it may be you shall do posterity good, if out of the carcase of dead and rotten greatness (as out of Samson's lion) there may be honey gathered for the use of future times." But Parliament was dissolved before the touching appeal reached them; and Bacon had to have recourse to other expedients. He consulted Selden about the technical legality of the sentence. He appealed to Buckingham, who vouchsafed to appear more placable. Once more he had recourse to Gondomar, "in that solitude of friends, which is the base-court of adversity," as a man whom he had "observed to have the magnanimity of his own nation and the cordiality of ours, and I am sure the wit of both"—and who had been equally kind to him in "both his fortunes;" and he proposed through Gondomar to present Gorhambury to Buckingham "for nothing," as a peace-offering. But the purchase of his liberty was to come in another way. Bacon had reconciled himself to giving up York House; but now Buckingham would not have it: he had found another house, he said, which suited him as well. That is to say, he did not now choose to have York House from Bacon himself; but he meant to have it. Accordingly, Buckingham let Bacon know through a friend of Bacon's, Sir Edward Sackville, that the price of his liberty to live in London was the cession of York House—not to Buckingham, but of all men in the world, to Lionel Cranfield, the man who had been so bitter against Bacon in the House of Commons. This is Sir Edward Sackville's account to Bacon of his talk with Buckingham; it is characteristic of every one concerned:

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"In the forenoon he laid the law, but in the afternoon he preached the gospel; when, after some revivations of the old distaste concerning York House, he most nobly opened his heart unto me; wherein I read that which augured much good towards you. After which revelation the book was again sealed up, and must in his own time only by himself be again manifested unto you. I have leave to remember some of the vision, and am not forbidden to write it. He vowed (not court like), but constantly to appear your friend so much, as if his Majesty should abandon the care of you, you should share his fortune with him. He pleased to tell me how much he had been beholden to you, how well he loved you, how unkindly he took the denial of your house (for so he will needs understand it); but the close for all this was harmonious, since he protested he would seriously begin to study your ends, now that the world should see he had no ends on you. He is in hand with the work, and therefore will by no means accept of your offer, though I can assure you the tender hath much won upon him, and mellowed his heart towards you, and your genius directed you aright when you writ that letter of denial to the Duke. The King saw it, and all the rest, which made him say unto the Marquis, you played an after-game well; and that now he had no reason to be much offended.

"I have already talked of the Revelation, and now am to speak in apocalyptical language, which I hope you will rightly comment: whereof if you make difficulty, the bearer can help you with the key of the cypher.

"My Lord Falkland by this time hath showed you London from Highgate. *If York House were gone, the town were yours*, and all your straitest shackles clean off, besides more comfort than the city air only. The Marquis would be exceeding glad the Treasurer had it. This I know; yet this you must not know from me. Bargain with him presently, upon as good conditions as you can procure, so you have direct motion from the Marquis to let him have it. Seem not to dive into the secret of it, though you are purblind if you see not through it. I have told Mr. Meautys how I would wish your Lordship now to make an end of it. From him I beseech you take it, and from me only the advice to perform it. If you part not speedily with it, you may defer the good which is approaching near you, and disappointing other aims (which must either shortly receive content or never), perhaps anew yield matter of discontent, though

you may be indeed as innocent as before. Make the Treasurer believe that since the Marquis will by no means accept of it, and that you must part with it, you are more willing to pleasure him than anybody else, because you are given to understand my Lord Marquis so inclines; which inclination, if the Treasurer shortly send unto you about it, desire may be more clearly manifested than as yet it hath been; since as I remember none hitherto hath told you *in terminis terminantibus* that the Marquis desires you should gratify the Treasurer. I know that way the hare runs, and that my Lord Marquis longs until Cranfield hath it; and so I wish too, for your good; yet would not it were absolutely passed until my Lord Marquis did send or write unto you to let him have it; for then his so disposing of it were but the next degree removed from the immediate acceptance of it, and your Lordship freed from doing it otherwise than to please him, and to comply with his own will and way."

It need hardly be said that when Cranfield got it, it soon passed into Buckingham's hands. "Bacon consented to part with his house, and Buckingham in return consented to give him his liberty." Yet Bacon could write to him, "low as I am, I had rather sojourn in a college in Cambridge than recover a good fortune by any other but yourself." "As for York House," he bids Toby Matthews to let Buckingham know, "that *whether in a straight line or a compass line*, I meant it for his Lordship, in the way which I thought might please him best." But liberty did not mean either money or recovered honour. All his life long he had made light of being in debt; but since his fall this was no longer a condition easy to bear. He had to beg some kind of pension of the King. He had to beg of Buckingham; "a small matter for my debts would do me more good now than double a twelvemonth hence. I have lost six thousand by the year, besides caps and courtesies. Two things I may assure your Lordship. The one, that I shall lead such a course of life as whatsoever

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the King doth for me shall rather sort to his Majesty's and your Lordship's honour than to envy; the other, that whatsoever men talk, I can play the good husband, and the King's bounty shall not be lost."

It might be supposed from the tone of these applications that Bacon's mind was bowed down and crushed by the extremity of his misfortune. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In his behaviour during his accusation there was little trace of that high spirit and fortitude shown by far inferior men under like disasters. But the moment the tremendous strain of his misfortunes was taken off, the vigour of his mind recovered itself. The buoyancy of his hopefulness, the elasticity of his energy, are as remarkable as his profound depression. When the end was approaching, his thoughts turned at once to other work to be done, ready in plan, ready to be taken up and finished. At the close of his last desperate letter to the King he cannot resist finishing at once with a jest, and with the prospect of two great literary undertakings—

"This is my last suit which I shall make to your Majesty in this business, prostrating myself at your mercy seat, after fifteen years service, wherein I have served your Majesty in my poor endeavours with an entire heart, and, as I presumed to say unto your Majesty, am still a virgin for matters that concern your person and crown; and now only craving that after eight steps of honour I be not precipitated altogether. But because he that hath taken bribes is apt to give bribes, I will go further, and present your Majesty with a bribe. For if your Majesty will give me peace and leisure, and God give me life, I will present your Majesty with a good history of England, and a better digest of your laws."

The Tower did, indeed, to use a word of the time, "mate" him. But the moment he was out of it, his quick and fertile mind was immediately at work in all di-

rections, reaching after all kinds of plans, making proof of all kinds of expedients to retrieve the past, arranging all kinds of work according as events might point out the way. His projects for history, for law, for philosophy, for letters, occupy quite as much of his thoughts as his pardon and his debts; and they, we have seen, occupied a good deal. If he was pusillanimous in the moment of the storm, his spirit, his force, his varied interests, returned the moment the storm was past. His self-reliance, which was boundless, revived. He never allowed himself to think, however men of his own time might judge him, that the future world would mistake him. "*Aliquis fui inter vivos*," he writes to Gondomar, "*neque omnino intermoriari apud posteros*." Even in his time he did not give up the hope of being restored to honour and power. He compared himself to Demosthenes, to Cicero, to Seneca, to Marcus Livius, who had been condemned for corrupt dealings as he had been, and had all recovered favour and position. Lookers-on were puzzled and shocked. "He has," writes Chamberlain, "no manner of feeling of his fall, but continuing vain and idle in all his humours as when he was at the highest." "I am said," Bacon himself writes, "to have a feather in my head."

Men were mistaken. His thoughts were, for the moment, more than ever turned to the future; but he had not given up hope of having a good deal to say yet to the affairs of the present. Strangely enough, as it seems to us, in the very summer after that fatal spring of 1621 the King called for his opinion concerning the reformation of Courts of Justice; and Bacon, just sentenced for corruption and still unpardoned, proceeds to give his advice as if he were a Privy Councillor in confidential employment. Early in the following year he, according to his fashion, surveyed

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his position, and drew up a paper of memoranda, like the notes of the *Commentarius Solutus* of 1608, about points to be urged to the King at an interview. Why should not the King employ him again? "Your Majesty never chid me;" and as to his condemnation, "as the fault was not against your Majesty, so my fall was not your act." "Therefore," he goes on, "if your Majesty do at any time find it fit for your affairs to employ me publicly upon the stage, I shall so live and spend my time as neither discontinuance shall disable me nor adversity shall discourage me, nor anything that I do give any new scandal or envy upon me." He insists very strongly that the King's service never mis-carried in his hands, for he simply carried out the King's wise counsels. "That his Majesty's business never mis-carried in my hands I do not impute to any extraordinary ability in myself, but to my freedom from any particular, either friends or ends, and my careful receipt of his directions, being, as I have formerly said to him, but as a bucket and cistern to that fountain—a bucket to draw forth, a cistern to preserve." He is not afraid of the apparent slight to the censure passed on him by Parliament. "For envy, it is an almanack of the old year, and as a friend of mine said, *Parliament died penitent towards me.*" "What the King bestows on me will be further seen than on Paul's steeple." "There be mountebanks, as well in the civil body as in the natural; I ever served his Majesty with modesty; no shouting, no undertaking." In the odd fashion of the time—a fashion in which no one more delighted than himself—he lays hold of sacred words to give point to his argument.

"I may allude to the three petitions of the Litany—*Libera nos Domine; parce nobis, Domine; audi nos, Domine.* In the first, I am persuaded that his Majesty had a mind to do it, and could not conveniently in respect of his affairs. In the second, he hath done it

in my fine and pardon. In the third, he hath likewise performed, in restoring to the light of his countenance."

But if the King did not see fit to restore him to public employment, he would be ready to give private counsel; and he would apply himself to any "literary province" that the King appointed. "I am like ground fresh. If I be left to myself I will graze and bear natural philosophy; but if the King will plough me up again, and sow me with anything, I hope to give him some yield." "Your Majesty hath power; I have faith. Therefore a miracle may be wrought." And he proposes, for matters in which his pen might be useful, first, as "active" works, the recompiling of laws; the disposing of wards, and generally the education of youth; the regulation of the jurisdiction of Courts; and the regulation of Trade; and for "contemplative," the continuation of the history of Henry VIII.; a general treatise *de Legibus et Justitia*; and the "Holy War" against the Ottomans.

When he wrote this he had already shown what his unquelled energy could accomplish. In the summer and autumn after his condemnation, amid all the worries and inconveniences of that time, moving about from place to place, without his books, and without free access to papers and records, he had written his *History of Henry VII.* The theme had, no doubt, been long in his head. But the book was the first attempt at philosophical history in the language, and it at once takes rank with all that the world had yet seen, in classical times and more recently in Italy, of such history. He sent the book, among other persons, to the Queen of Bohemia, with a phrase, the translation of a trite Latin commonplace, which may have been the parent of one which became famous in our time; and with an expression of absolute confidence in the goodness of his own work.

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"I have read in books that it is accounted a great bliss for a man to have *Leisure with Honour*. That was never my fortune. For time was, I had Honour without Leisure; and now I have *Leisure without Honour*. . . . But my desire is now to have *Leisure without Loitering*, and not to become an abbey-lubber, as the old proverb was, but to yield some fruit of my private life. . . . If King Henry were alive again, I hope verily he would not be so angry with me for not flattering him, as well pleased in seeing himself so truly described in colours that will last and be believed."

But the tide had turned against him for good. A few fair words, a few grudging doles of money to relieve his pressing wants, and those sometimes intercepted and perhaps never rightly granted from an Exchequer which even Cranfield's finance could not keep filled, were all the graces that descended upon him from those fountains of goodness in which he professed to trust with such boundless faith. The King did not want him, perhaps did not trust him, perhaps did not really like him. When the *Novum Organum* came out, all that he had to say about it was in the shape of a profane jest that "it was like the peace of God --it passed all understanding." Other men had the ear of Buckingham; shrewd, practical men of business like Cranfield, who hated Bacon's loose and careless ways, or the clever ecclesiastic Williams, whose counsel had steered Buckingham safely through the tempest that wrecked Bacon, and who, with no legal training, had been placed in Bacon's seat. "I thought," said Bacon, "that I should have known my successor." Williams, for his part, charged Bacon with trying to cheat his creditors, when his fine was remitted. With no open quarrel, Bacon's relations to Buckingham became more ceremonious and guarded; the "My singular good Lord" of the former letters becomes, now that Buckingham had risen so high and Bacon had sunk so low, "Excellent Lord." The one friend to whom Ba-

can had once wished to owe everything had become the great man, now only to be approached with "sweet meats" and elaborate courtesy. But it was no use. His full pardon Bacon did not get, though earnestly suing for it, that he might not "die in ignominy." He never sat again in Parliament. The Provostship of Eton fell vacant, and Bacon's hopes were kindled. "It were a pretty cell for my fortune. The College and School I do not doubt but I shall make to flourish." But Buckingham had promised it to some nameless follower, and by some process of exchange it went to Sir Henry Wotton. His English history was offered in vain. His digest of the Laws was offered in vain. In vain he wrote a memorandum on the regulation of usury; notes of advice to Buckingham; elaborate reports and notes of speeches about a war with Spain, when that for a while loomed before the country. In vain he affected an interest which he could hardly have felt in the Spanish marriage, and the escapade of Buckingham and Prince Charles, which "began," he wrote, "like a fable of the poets, but deserved all in a piece a worthy narration." In vain, when the Spanish marriage was off and the French was on, he proposed to offer to Buckingham "his service to live a summer as upon mine own delight at Paris, to settle a fast intelligence between France and us;" "I have somewhat of the French," he said, "I love birds, as the King doth." Public patronage and public employment were at an end for him. His petitions to the King and Buckingham ceased to be for office, but for the clearing of his name and for the means of living. It is piteous to read the earnestness of his requests. "Help me (dear Sovereign lord and master), pity me so far as that I who have borne a bag be not now in my age forced in effect to bear a wallet." The words are from a carefully-prepared and

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rhetorical letter which was not sent, but they express what he added to a letter presenting the *De Augmentis*; "*det Vestra Majestas obolum Belisario.*" Again, "I prostrate myself at your Majesty's feet; I your ancient servant, now sixty-four years old in age, and three years and five months old in misery. I desire not from your Majesty means, nor place, nor employment, but only after so long a time of expiation, a complete and total remission of the sentence of the Upper House, to the end that blot of ignominy may be removed from me, and from my memory and posterity, that I die not a condemned man, but may be to your Majesty, as I am to God, *nova creatura.*" But the pardon never came. Sir John Bennett, who had been condemned as a corrupt judge by the same Parliament, and between whose case and Bacon's there was as much difference, "I will not say as between black and white, but as between black and gray," had got his full pardon, "and they say shall sit in Parliament." Lord Suffolk had been one of Bacon's judges. "I hope I deserve not to be the only outcast." But whether the Court did not care, or whether, as he once suspected, there was some old enemy like Coke, who "had a tooth against him," and was watching any favour shown him, he died without his wish being fulfilled, "to live out of want and to die out of ignominy."

Bacon was undoubtedly an impoverished man, and straitened in his means; but this must be understood as in relation to the rank and position which he still held, and the work which he wanted done for the *Instauratio*. His will, dated a few months before his death, shows that it would be a mistake to suppose that he was in penury. He no doubt often wanted ready money, and might be vexed by creditors. But he kept a large household, and was able to live in comfort at Gray's Inn or at Gorhambury. A man

who speaks in his will of his "four coach geldings and his best carouche," besides many legacies, and who proposes to found two lectures at the universities, may have troubles about debts and be cramped in his expenditure, but it is only relatively to his station that he can be said to be poor. And to subordinate officers of the Treasury who kept him out of his rights, he could still write a sharp letter, full of his old force and edge. A few months before his death he thus wrote to the Lord Treasurer Ley, who probably had made some difficulty about a claim for money:

"MY LORD,—I humbly entreat your Lordship, and (if I may use the word) advise your Lordship to make me a better answer. Your Lordship is interested in honour, in the opinion of all that hear how I am dealt with. If your Lordship malice me for Long's cause, surely it was one of the justest businesses that ever was in Chancery. I will avouch it; and how deeply I was tempted therein, your Lordship knoweth best. Your Lordship may do well to think of your grave as I do of mine; and to beware of hardness of heart. And as for fair words, it is a wind by which neither your Lordship nor any man else can sail long. Howsoever, I am the man that shall give all due respects and reverence to your great place.

"20th June, 1625.

FR. ST. ALBAN."

Bacon always claimed that he was not "vindictive." But considering how Bishop Williams, when he was Lord Keeper, had charged Bacon with "knavery" and "deceiving his creditors" in the arrangements about his fine, it is not a little strange to find that at the end of his life Bacon had so completely made friends with him that he chose him as the person to whom he meant to leave his speeches and letters, which he was "willing should not be lost," and also the charge of superintending two foundations of £200 a year for Natural Science at the universities. And the Bishop accepted the charge.

The end of this, one of the most pathetic of histories,

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was at hand ; the end was not the less pathetic because it came in so homely a fashion. On a cold day in March he stopped his coach in the snow on his way to Highgate, to try the effect of cold in arresting putrefaction. He bought a hen from a woman by the way, and stuffed it with snow. He was taken with a bad chill, which forced him to stop at a strange house, Lord Arundel's, to whom he wrote his last letter—a letter of apology for using his house. He did not write the letter as a dying man. But disease had fastened on him. A few days after, early on Easter morning, April 9, 1626, he passed away. He was buried at St. Albans, in the Church of St. Michael, "the only Christian church within the walls of old Verulam." "For my name and memory," he said in his will, "I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations and the next ages." So he died: the brightest, richest, largest mind but one, in the age which had seen Shakespeare and his fellows; so bright and rich and large that there have been found those who identify him with the writer of *Hamlet* and *Othello*. That is idle. Bacon could no more have written the plays than Shakespeare could have prophesied the triumphs of natural philosophy. So ended a career, than which no other in his time had grander and nobler aims—aims, however mistaken, for the greatness and good of England; aims for the enlargement of knowledge and truth, and for the benefit of mankind. So ended a career which had mounted slowly and painfully, but resolutely, to the highest pinnacle of greatness—greatness full of honour and beneficent activity—suddenly to plunge down to depths where honour and hope were irrecoverable. So closed, in disgrace and disappointment and neglect, the last sad chapter of a life which had begun so brightly, which had achieved such permanent triumphs.

which had lost itself so often in the tangles of insincerity and evil custom, which was disfigured and marred by great misfortunes, and still more by great mistakes of his own, which was in many ways misunderstood not only by his generation but by himself, but which he left in the constant and almost unaccountable faith that it would be understood and greatly honoured by posterity. With all its glories, it was the greatest shipwreck, the greatest tragedy, of an age which saw many.

But in these gloomy and dreary days of depression and vain hope to which his letters bear witness—"three years and five months old in misery," again later, "a long cleansing week of five years' expiation and more"—his interest in his great undertaking and his industry never flagged. The King did not want what he offered, did not want his histories, did not want his help about law. Well, then, he had work of his own on which his heart was set; and if the King did not want his time, he had the more for himself. Even in the busy days of his Chancellorship he had prepared and carried through the press the *Novum Organum*, which he published on the very eve of his fall. It was one of those works which quicken a man's powers, and prove to him what he can do; and it had its effect. His mind was never more alert than in these years of adversity, his labour never more indefatigable, his powers of expression never more keen and versatile and strong. Besides the political writings of grave argument for which he found time, these five years teem with the results of work. In the year before his death he sketched out once more, in a letter to a Venetian correspondent, Fra Fulgenzio, the friend of Sarpi, the plan of his great work, on which he was still busy, though with fast diminishing hopes of seeing it finished. To another foreign correspondent, a professor of

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philosophy at Annecy, and a distinguished mathematician, Father Baranzan, who had raised some questions about Bacon's method, and had asked what was to be done with metaphysics, he wrote in eager acknowledgment of the interest which his writings had excited, and insisting on the paramount necessity, above everything, of the observation of facts and of natural history, out of which philosophy may be built. But the most comprehensive view of his intellectual projects in all directions, "the fullest account of his own personal feelings and designs as a writer which we have from his own pen," is given in a letter to the venerable friend of his early days, Bishop Andrewes, who died a few months after him. Part, he says, of his *Instauratio*, "the work in mine own judgement (*si nunquam fallit imago*) I do most esteem," has been published; but because he "doubts that it flies too high over men's heads," he proposes "to draw it down to the sense" by examples of Natural History. He has enlarged and translated the *Advancement* into the *De Augmentis*. "Because he could not altogether desert the civil person that he had borne," he had begun a work on Laws, intermediate between philosophical jurisprudence and technical law. He had hoped to compile a digest of English law, but found it more than he could do alone, and had laid it aside. The *Instauratio* had contemplated the good of men "in the dowries of nature;" the *Laws*, their good "in society and the dowries of government." As he owed duty to his country, and could no longer do it service, he meant to do it honour by his history of Henry VII. His *Essays* were but "recreations;" and remembering that all his writings had hitherto "gone all into the City and none into the Temple," he wished to make "some poor oblation," and therefore had chosen an argument mixed of religious and civil considera-



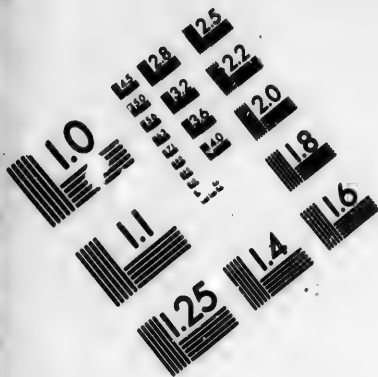
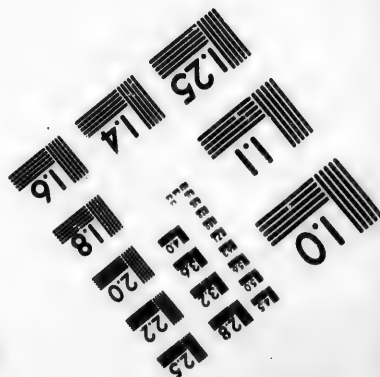
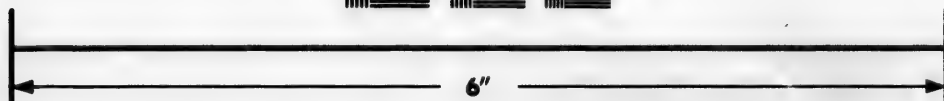
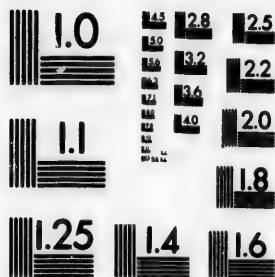


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tions, the dialogue of "an Holy War" against the Ottoman, which he never finished, but which he intended to dedicate to Andrewes, "in respect of our ancient and private acquaintance, and because amongst the men of our times I hold you in special reverence."

The question naturally presents itself, in regard to a friend of Bishop Andrewes, What was Bacon as regards religion? And the answer, it seems to me, can admit of no doubt. The obvious and superficial thing to say is that his religion was but an official one, a tribute to custom and opinion. But it was not so. Both in his philosophical thinking, and in the feelings of his mind in the various accidents and occasions of life, Bacon was a religious man, with a serious and genuine religion. His sense of the truth and greatness of religion was as real as his sense of the truth and greatness of nature; they were interlaced together, and could not be separated, though they were to be studied separately and independently. The call, repeated through all his works from the earliest to the last, *Da Fidei quæ Fidei sunt*, was a warning against confusing the two, but was an earnest recognition of the claims of each. The solemn religious words in which his prefaces and general statements often wind up with thanksgiving and hope and prayer, are no mere words of course; they breathe the spirit of the deepest conviction. It is true that he takes the religion of Christendom as he finds it. The grounds of belief, the relation of faith to reason, the profounder inquiries into the basis of man's knowledge of the Eternal and Invisible, are out of the circle within which he works. What we now call the philosophy of religion is absent from his writings. In truth, his mind was not qualified to grapple with such questions. There is no sign in his writings that he ever tried his strength against them; that he ever

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cared to go below the surface into the hidden things of mind, and what mind deals with above and beyond sense—those metaphysical difficulties and depths, as we call them, which there is no escaping, and which are as hard to explore and as dangerous to mistake as the forces and combinations of external nature. But it does not follow, because he had not asked all the questions that others have asked, that he had not thought out his reasonable faith. His religion was not one of mere vague sentiment: it was the result of reflection and deliberate judgment. It was the discriminating and intelligent Church of England religion of Hooker and Andrewes, which had gone back to something deeper and nobler in Christianity than the popular Calvinism of the earlier Reformation; and though sternly hostile to the system of the Papacy, both on religious and political grounds, attempted to judge it with knowledge and justice. This deliberate character of his belief is shown in the remarkable Confession of Faith which he left behind him: a closely-reasoned and nobly-expressed survey of Christian theology—"a *summa theologiæ*, digested into seven pages of the finest English of the days when its tones were finest." "The entire scheme of Christian theology," as Mr. Spedding says, "is constantly in his thoughts; underlies everything; defines for him the limits of human speculation; and, as often as the course of inquiry touches at any point the boundary line, never fails to present itself. There is hardly any occasion or any kind of argument into which it does not at one time or another incidentally introduce itself." Doubtless it was a religion which in him was compatible, as it has been in others, with grave faults of temperament and character. But it is impossible to doubt that it was honest, that it elevated his thoughts, that it was a refuge and stay in the times of trouble.

CHAPTER VIII.

BACON'S PHILOSOPHY.

BACON was one of those men to whom posterity forgives a great deal for the greatness of what he has done and attempted for posterity. It is idle, unless all honest judgment is foregone, to disguise the many deplorable shortcomings of his life; it is unjust to have one measure for him, and another for those about him and opposed to him. But it is not too much to say that in temper, in honesty, in labour, in humility, in reverence, he was the most perfect example that the world had yet seen of the student of nature, the enthusiast for knowledge. That such a man was tempted and fell, and suffered the Nemesis of his fall, is an instance of the awful truth embodied in the tragedy of *Faust*. But his genuine devotion, so unwearied and so paramount, to a great idea and a great purpose for the good of all generations to come, must shield him from the insult of Pope's famous and shallow epigram. Whatever may have been his sins, and they were many, he cannot have been the "meanest of mankind," who lived and died, holding unaltered, amid temptations and falls, so noble a conception of the use and calling of his life: the duty and service of helping his brethren to know as they had never yet learned to know. That thought never left him; the obligations it imposed were never forgotten in the crush

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and heat of business; the toils, thankless at the time, which it heaped upon him in addition to the burdens of public life were never refused. Nothing diverted him, nothing made him despair. He was not discouraged because he was not understood. There never was any one in whose life the "*Souveraineté du but*" was more certain and more apparent; and that object was the second greatest that man can have. To teach men to know is only next to making them good.

The Baconian philosophy, the reforms of the *Novum Organum*, the method of experiment and induction, are commonplaces, and sometimes lead to a misconception of what Bacon did. Bacon is, and is not, the founder of modern science. What Bacon believed could be done, what he hoped and divined, for the correction and development of human knowledge, was one thing; what his methods were, and how far they were successful, is another. It would hardly be untrue to say that though Bacon is the parent of modern science, his methods contributed nothing to its actual discoveries; neither by possibility could they have done so. The great and wonderful work which the world owes to him was in the idea, and not in the execution. The idea was that the systematic and wide examination of facts was the first thing to be done in science, and that till this had been done faithfully and impartially, with all the appliances and all the safeguards that experience and forethought could suggest, all generalisations, all anticipations from mere reasoning, must be adjourned and postponed; and further, that sought on these conditions, knowledge, certain and fruitful, beyond all that men then imagined, could be attained. His was the faith of the discoverer, the imagination of the poet, the voice of the prophet. But his was not the warrior's arm, the engineer's

skill, the architect's creativeness. "I only sound the clarion," he says, "but I enter not into the battle;" and with a Greek quotation very rare with him, he compares himself to one of Homer's peaceful heralds, *χαίρετε κήρυκες, Δίος ἄγγελοι ἡδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν*. Even he knew not the full greatness of his own enterprise. He underrated the vastness and the subtlety of nature. He overrated his own appliances to bring it under his command. He had not that incommunicable genius and instinct of the investigator which in such men as Faraday close hand to hand with phenomena. His weapons and instruments wanted precision; they were powerful up to a certain point, but they had the clumsiness of an unpractised time. Cowley compared him to Moses on Pisgah surveying the promised land; it was but a distant survey, and Newton was the Joshua who began to take possession of it.

The idea of the great enterprise, in its essential outline, and with a full sense of its originality and importance, was early formed, and was even sketched on paper with Bacon's characteristic self-reliance when he was but twenty-five. Looking back, in a letter written in the last year of his life, on the ardour and constancy with which he had clung to his faith—"in that purpose my mind never waxed old; in that long interval of time it never cooled"—he remarks that it was then "forty years since he put together a youthful essay on these matters, which with vast confidence I called by the high-sounding title, *The Greatest Birth of Time*." "*The Greatest Birth of Time*," whatever it was, has perished, though the name, altered to "*Partus Temporis Masculus*," has survived, attached to some fragments of uncertain date and arrangement. But in very truth the child was born, and, as Bacon says, for forty years grew and developed, with many changes yet the same. Bacon

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was most tenacious, not only of ideas, but even of the phrases, images, and turns of speech in which they had once flashed on him and taken shape in his mind. The features of his undertaking remained the same from first to last, only expanded and enlarged as time went on and experience widened; his conviction that the knowledge of nature, and with it the power to command and to employ nature, were within the capacity of mankind and might be restored to them; the certainty that of this knowledge men had as yet acquired but the most insignificant part, and that all existing claims to philosophical truth were as idle and precarious as the guesses and traditions of the vulgar; his belief that no greater object could be aimed at than to sweep away once and for ever all this sham knowledge and all that supported it, and to lay an entirely new and clear foundation to build on for the future; his assurance that, as it was easy to point out with fatal and luminous certainty the rottenness and hollowness of all existing knowledge and philosophy, so it was equally easy to devise and practically apply new and natural methods of investigation and construction, which should replace it by knowledge of infallible truth and boundless fruitfulness. His object—to gain the key to the interpretation of nature; his method—to gain it, not by the means common to all previous schools of philosophy, by untested reasonings and imposing and high-sounding generalisations, but by a series and scale of rigorously verified inductions, starting from the lowest facts of experience to discoveries which should prove and realise themselves by leading deductively to practical results—these, in one form or another, were the theme of his philosophical writings from the earliest sight of them that we gain.

He had disclosed what was in his mind in the letter to

Lord Burghley, written when he was thirty-one (1588), in which he announced that he had "taken all knowledge for his province," to "purge it of 'frivolous disputations' and 'blind experiments,' and that whatever happened to him, he meant to be a 'true pioneer in the mine of truth.'" But the first public step in the opening of his great design was the publication in the autumn of 1605 of the *Advancement of Learning*, a careful and balanced report on the existing stock and deficiencies of human knowledge. His endeavours, as he says in the *Advancement* itself, are "but as an image in a cross-way, that may point out the way, but cannot go it." But from this image of his purpose, his thoughts greatly widened as time went on. The *Advancement*, in part at least, was probably a hurried work. It shadowed out, but only shadowed out, the lines of his proposed reform of philosophical thought; it showed his dissatisfaction with much that was held to be sound and complete, and showed the direction of his ideas and hopes. But it was many years before he took a further step. Active life intervened. In 1620, at the height of his prosperity, on the eve of his fall, he published the long meditated *Novum Organum*, the avowed challenge to the old philosophies, the engine and instrument of thought and discovery which was to put to shame and supersede all others, containing, in part at least, the principles of that new method of the use of experience which was to be the key to the interpretation and command of nature, and, together with the method, an elaborate but incomplete exemplification of its leading processes. Here were summed up, and stated with the most solemn earnestness, the conclusions to which long study and continual familiarity with the matters in question had led him. And with the *Novum Organum* was at length disclosed, though only in outline, the whole of the vast

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scheme in all its parts, object, method, materials, results, for the "Instauration" of human knowledge, the restoration of powers lost, disused, neglected, latent, but recoverable by honesty, patience, courage, and industry.

The *Instauration*, as he planned the work, "is to be divided," says Mr. Ellis, "into six portions, of which the *first* is to contain a general survey of the present state of knowledge. In the *second*, men are to be taught how to use their understanding aright in the investigation of nature. In the *third*, all the phenomena of the universe are to be stored up as in a treasure-house, as the materials on which the new method is to be employed. In the *fourth*, examples are to be given of its operation and of the results to which it leads. The *fifth* is to contain what Bacon had accomplished in natural philosophy *without* the aid of his own method, *ex eodem intellectus usu quem alii in inquirendo et inveniando adhibere consueverunt*. It is therefore less important than the rest, and Bacon declares that he will not bind himself to the conclusions which it contains. Moreover, its value will altogether cease when the *sixth* part can be completed, wherein will be set forth the new philosophy—the results of the application of the new method to all the phenomena of the universe. But to complete this, the last part of the *Instauration*, Bacon does not hope; he speaks of it as a thing, *et supra vires et ultra spes nostras collocata*."—*Works*, i. 71.

The *Novum Organum*, itself imperfect, was the crown of all that he lived to do. It was followed (1622) by the publication, intended to be periodical, of materials for the new philosophy to work upon, particular sections and classes of observations on phenomena—the *History of the Winds*, the *History of Life and Death*. Others were partly prepared but not published by him. And finally, in 1623, he brought out in Latin a greatly enlarged recasting of the *Advancement*; the nine books of the "*De Augmentis*." But the great scheme was not completed; portions were left more or less finished. Much that he

purposed was left undone, and could not have been yet done at that time.

But the works which he published represent imperfectly the labour spent on the undertaking. Besides these there remains a vast amount of unused or rejected work, which shows how it was thought out, rearranged, tried first in one fashion and then in another, recast, developed. Separate chapters, introductions, "experimental essays and discarded beginnings," treatises with picturesque and imaginative titles, succeeded one another in that busy workshop; and these first drafts and tentative essays have in them some of the freshest and most felicitous forms of his thoughts. At one time his enterprise, connecting itself with his own life and mission, rose before his imagination and kindled his feelings, and embodied itself in the lofty and stately "Proem" already quoted. His quick and brilliant imagination saw shadows and figures of his ideas in the ancient mythology, which he worked out with curious ingenuity and often much poetry in his *Wisdom of the Ancients*. Towards the end of his life he began to embody his thoughts and plans in a philosophical tale, which he did not finish—the *New Atlantis*—a charming example of his graceful fancy and of his power of easy and natural storytelling. Between the *Advancement* and the *Novum Organum* (1605–20) much underground work had been done. "He had finally (about 1607) settled the plan of the *Great Instauration*, and began to call it by that name." The plan, first in three or four divisions, had been finally digested into six. Vague outlines had become definite and clear. Distinct portions had been worked out. Various modes of treatment had been tried, abandoned, modified. Prefaces were written to give the sketch and purpose of chapters not yet composed. The *Novum Organum* had

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been written and rewritten twelve times over. Bacon kept his papers, and we can trace in the unused portion of those left behind him much of the progress of his work, and the shapes which much of it went through. The *Advancement* itself is the filling out and perfecting of what is found in germ, meagre and rudimentary, in a *Discourse in Praise of Knowledge*, written in the days of Elizabeth, and in some Latin chapters of an early date, the *Cogitationes de Scientia Humana*, on the limits and use of knowledge, and on the relation of natural history to natural philosophy. These early essays, with much of the same characteristic illustration, and many of the favourite images and maxims and texts and phrases, which continue to appear in his writings to the end, contain the thoughts of a man long accustomed to meditate and to see his way on the new aspects of knowledge opening upon him. And before the *Advancement* he had already tried his hand on a work intended to be in two books, which Mr. Ellis describes as a "great work on the Interpretation of Nature," the "earliest type of the *Instauratio*," and which Bacon called by the enigmatical name of *Valerius Terminus*. In it, as in a second draft, which in its turn was superseded by the *Advancement*, the line of thought of the Latin *Cogitationes* reappears, expanded and more carefully ordered; it contains also the first sketch of his certain and infallible method for what he calls the "freeing of the direction" in the search after Truth, and the first indications of the four classes of "Idols" which were to be so memorable a portion of Bacon's teaching. And between the *Advancement* and the *Novum Organum* at least one unpublished treatise of great interest intervened, the *Visa et Cogitata*, on which he was long employed, and which he brought to a finished shape, fit to be submitted to his friends and critics, Sir

Thomas Bodley and Bishop Andrewes. It is spoken of as a book to be "imparted *sicut videbitur*," in the review which he made of his life and objects soon after he was made Solicitor in 1608. A number of fragments also bear witness to the fierce scorn and wrath which possessed him against the older and the received philosophies. He tried his hand at declamatory onslaughts on the leaders of human wisdom, from the early Greeks and Aristotle down to the latest "novellists;" and he certainly succeeded in being magnificently abusive. But he thought wisely that this was not the best way of doing what in the *Commentarius Solutus* he calls on himself to do—"taking a greater confidence and authority in discourses of this nature, *tanquam sui certus et de alto despiciens*;" and the rhetorical *Redargutio Philosophiarum* and writings of kindred nature were laid aside by his more serious judgment. But all these fragments witness to the immense and unwearied labour bestowed in the midst of a busy life on his undertaking; they suggest, too, the suspicion that there was much waste from interruption, and the doubt whether his work would not have been better if it could have been more steadily continuous. But if ever a man had a great object in life, and pursued it through good and evil report, through ardent hope and keen disappointment, to the end, with unwearied patience and unshaken faith, it was Bacon, when he sought the improvement of human knowledge "for the glory of God and the relief of man's estate." It is not the least part of the pathetic fortune of his life that his own success was so imperfect.

When a reader first comes from the vague, popular notions of Bacon's work to his definite proposals the effect is startling. Every one has heard that he contemplated a complete reform of the existing conceptions of human

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knowledge, and of the methods by which knowledge was to be sought; that rejecting them as vitiated, by the loose and untested way in which they had been formed, he called men from verbal generalisations and unproved assumptions to come down face to face with the realities of experience; that he substituted for formal reasoning, from baseless premises and unmeaning principles, a methodical system of cautious and sifting inference from wide observation and experiment; and that he thus opened the path which modern science thenceforth followed, with its amazing and unexhausted discoveries, and its vast and beneficent practical results. We credit all this to Bacon, and assuredly not without reason. All this is what was embraced in his vision of a changed world of thought and achievement. All this is what was meant by that *Regnum Hominis*, which, with a play on sacred words which his age did not shrink from, and which he especially pleased himself with, marked the coming of that hitherto uninimagined empire of man over the powers and forces which encompassed him. But the detail of all this is multifarious and complicated, and is not always what we expect; and when we come to see how his work is estimated by those who, by greatest familiarity with scientific ideas and the history of scientific inquiries, are best fitted to judge of it, many a surprise awaits us.

For we find that the greatest differences of opinion exist on the value of what he did. Not only very unfavourable judgments have been passed upon it, on general grounds—as an irreligious, or a shallow and one-sided, or a poor and “utilitarian” philosophy, and on a definite comparison of it with the actual methods and processes which as a matter of history have been the real means of scientific discovery—but also some of those who have most admired his genius,

and with the deepest love and reverence have spared no pains to do it full justice, have yet come to the conclusion that as an instrument and real method of work Bacon's attempt was a failure. It is not only De Maistre and Lord Macaulay who dispute his philosophical eminence. It is not only the depreciating opinion of a contemporary like Harvey, who was actually doing what Bacon was writing about. It is not only that men who after the long history of modern science have won their place among its leaders, and are familiar by daily experience with the ways in which it works—a chemist like Liebig, a physiologist like Claude Bernard—say that they can find nothing to help them in Bacon's methods. It is not only that a clear and exact critic like M. de Rémusat looks at his attempt, with its success and failure, as characteristic of English, massive, practical good sense rather than as marked by real philosophical depth and refinement, such as Continental thinkers point to and are proud of in Descartes and Leibnitz. It is not even that a competent master of the whole domain of knowledge, Whewell, filled with the deepest sense of all that the world owes to Bacon, takes for granted that "though Bacon's general maxims are sagacious and animating, his particular precepts failed in his hands, and are now practically useless;" and assuming that Bacon's method is not the right one, and not complete as far as the progress of science up to his time could direct it, proceeds to construct a *Novum Organum Renovatum*. But Bacon's writings have recently undergone the closest examination by two editors, whose care for his memory is as loyal and affectionate as their capacity is undoubted, and their willingness to take trouble boundless. And Mr. Ellis and Mr. Spedding, with all their interest in every detail of Bacon's work, and admiration of the way in which he performed it, make no secret of their conclusion

that he failed in the very thing on which he was most bent—the discovery of practical and fruitful ways of scientific inquiry. "Bacon," says Mr. Spedding, "failed to devise a practicable method for the discovery of the Forms of Nature, because he misconceived the conditions of the case. . . . For the same reason he failed to make any single discovery which holds its place as one of the steps by which science has in any direction really advanced. The clew with which he entered the labyrinth did not reach far enough; before he had nearly attained his end he was obliged either to come back or to go on without it."

"His peculiar system of philosophy," says Mr. Spedding in another preface, "that is to say, the peculiar method of investigation, the "*organum*," the "*formula*," the "*clavis*," the "*ars ipsa interpretandi naturam*," the "*filum Labyrinthi*," or by whatever of its many names we choose to call that artificial process by which alone he believed man could attain a knowledge of the laws and a command over the powers of nature—*of this philosophy we can make nothing*. If we have not tried it, it is because we feel confident that it would not answer. We regard it as a curious piece of machinery, very subtle, elaborate, and ingenious, but not worth constructing, because all the work it could do may be done more easily another way."—*Works*, iii. 171.

What his method really was is itself a matter of question. Mr. Ellis speaks of it as a matter "but imperfectly apprehended." He differs from his fellow-labourer Mr. Spedding, in what he supposes to be its central and characteristic innovation. Mr. Ellis finds it in an improvement and perfection of logical machinery. Mr. Spedding finds it in the formation of a great "natural and experimental history," a vast collection of facts in every department of nature, which was to be a more important part of his philosophy than the *Novum Organum* itself. Both of them think that as he went on, the difficulties of the

work grew upon him, and caused alterations in his plans, and we are reminded that "there is no didactic exposition of his method in the whole of his writings," and that "this has not been sufficiently remarked by those who have spoken of his philosophy."

In the first place, the kind of intellectual instrument which he proposed to construct was a mistake. His great object was to place the human mind "on a level with things and nature" (*ut faciamus intellectum humanum rebus et naturæ parem*), and this could only be done by a revolution in methods. The ancients had all that genius could do for man; but it was a matter, he said, not of the strength and fleetness of the running, but of the rightness of the way. It was a new method, absolutely different from anything known, which he proposed to the world, and which should lead men to knowledge, with the certainty and with the impartial facility of a high-road. The Induction which he imagined to himself as the contrast to all that had yet been tried was to have two qualities. It was to end, by no very prolonged or difficult processes, in absolute certainty. And next, it was to leave very little to the differences of intellectual power: it was to level minds and capacities. It was to give all men the same sort of power which a pair of compasses gives the hand in drawing a circle. "*Absolute certainty, and a mechanical mode of procedure*," says Mr. Ellis, "*such that all men should be capable of employing it, are the two great features of the Baconian system.*" This he thought possible, and this he set himself to expound—"a method universally applicable, and in all cases infallible." In this he saw the novelty and the vast importance of his discovery. "By this method all the knowledge which the human mind was capable of receiving might be attained, and attained

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without unnecessary labour." It was a method of "a demonstrative character, with the power of reducing all minds to nearly the same level." The conception, indeed, of a "great Art of knowledge," of an "Instauration" of the sciences, of a "Clavis" which should unlock the difficulties which had hindered discovery, was not a new one. This attempt at a method which should be certain, which should level capacities, which should do its work in a short time, had a special attraction for the imagination of the wild spirits of the South, from Raimond Lulli in the thirteenth century to the audacious Calabrians of the sixteenth. With Bacon it was something much more serious and reasonable and business-like. But such a claim has never yet been verified; there is no reason to think that it ever can be; and to have made it shows a fundamental defect in Bacon's conception of the possibilities of the human mind and the field it has to work in.

In the next place, though the prominence which he gave to the doctrine of Induction was one of those novelities which are so obvious after the event, though so strange before it, and was undoubtedly the element in his system which gave it life and power and influence on the course of human thought and discovery, his account of Induction was far from complete and satisfactory. Without troubling himself about the theory of Induction, as De Rémusat has pointed out, he contented himself with applying to its use the precepts of common-sense and a sagacious perception of the circumstances in which it was to be employed. But even these precepts, notable as they were, wanted distinctness, and the qualities needed for working rules. The change is great when in fifty years we pass from the poetical science of Bacon to the mathematical and precise science of Newton. His own time may well have been

struck by the originality and comprehensiveness of such a discriminating arrangement of proofs as the "Prerogative Instances" of the *Novum Organum*, so natural and real, yet never before thus compared and systematized. But there is a great interval between his method of experimenting, his "*Hunt of Pan*"—the three tables of Instances, "*Presence*," "*Absence*," and "*Degrees, or Comparisons*," leading to a process of sifting and exclusion, and to the *First Vintage*, or beginnings of theory—and say, for instance, Mill's four methods of experimental inquiry: the method of *agreement*, of *differences*, of *residues*, and of *concomitant variations*. The course which he marked out so laboriously and so ingeniously for Induction to follow was one which was found to be impracticable, and as barren of results as those deductive philosophies on which he lavished his scorn. He has left precepts and examples of what he meant by his cross-examining and sifting processes. As admonitions to cross-examine and to sift facts and phenomena they are valuable. Many of the observations and classifications are subtle and instructive. But in his hands nothing comes of them. They lead at the utmost to mere negative conclusions; they show what a thing is not. But his attempt to elicit anything positive out of them breaks down, or ends at best in divinations and guesses, sometimes—as in connecting Heat and Motion—very near to later and more carefully-grounded theories, but always unverified. He had a radically false and mechanical conception, though in words he earnestly disclaims it, of the way to deal with the facts of nature. He looked on them as things which told their own story, and suggested the questions which ought to be put to them; and with this idea half his time was spent in collecting huge masses of indigested facts of the most various au-

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thenticity and value, and he thought he was collecting materials which his method had only to touch in order to bring forth from them light and truth and power. He thought that, not in certain sciences, but in all, one set of men could do the observing and collecting, and another be set on the work of Induction and the discovery of "axioms." Doubtless in the arrangement and sorting of them his versatile and ingenious mind gave itself full play; he divides and distinguishes them into their companies and groups, different kinds of Motion, "Prerogative" instances, with their long tale of imaginative titles. But we look in vain for any use that he was able to make of them, or even to suggest. Bacon never adequately realised that no promiscuous assemblage of even the most certain facts could ever lead to knowledge, could ever suggest their own interpretation, without the action on them of the living mind, without the initiative of an idea. In truth he was so afraid of assumptions and "anticipations" and prejudices—his great bugbear was so much the "*intellectus, sibi permissus*," the mind given liberty to guess and imagine and theorise, instead of, as it ought, absolutely and servilely submitting itself to the control of facts—that he missed the true place of the rational and formative element in his account of Induction. He does tell us, indeed, that "truth emerges sooner from error than from confusion." He indulges the mind, in the course of its investigation of "Instances," with a first "vintage" of provisional generalisations. But of the way in which the living mind of the discoverer works, with its ideas and insight, and thoughts that come no one knows whence, working hand in hand with what comes before the eye or is tested by the instrument, he gives us no picture. Compare his elaborate investigation of the "Form

of Heat" in the *Novum Organum*, with such a record of real inquiry as Wells's *Treatise on Dew*, or Herschel's analysis of it in his *Introduction to Natural Philosophy*. And of the difference of genius between a Faraday or a Newton, and the crowd of average men who have used and finished off their work, he takes no account. Indeed, he thinks that for the future such difference is to disappear.

"That his method is impracticable," says Mr. Ellis, "cannot, I think, be denied, if we reflect not only that it never has produced any result, but also that the process by which scientific truths have been established cannot be so presented as even to appear to be in accordance with it. In all cases this process involves an element to which nothing corresponds in the Tables of 'Comparance' and 'Exclusion,' namely, the application to the facts of observation of a principle of arrangement, an idea, existing in the mind of the discoverer antecedently to the act of induction. It may be said that this idea is precisely one of the *naturæ* into which the facts of observation ought in Bacon's system to be analysed. And this is in one sense true; but it must be added that this analysis, if it be thought right so to call it, is of the essence of the discovery which results from it. In most cases the act of induction follows as a matter of course as soon as the appropriate idea has been introduced."—Ellis, *General Preface*, i. 38.

Lastly, not only was Bacon's conception of philosophy so narrow as to exclude one of its greatest domains; for, says Mr. Ellis, "it cannot be denied that to Bacon all sound philosophy seemed to be included in what we now call the natural sciences," and in all its parts was claimed as the subject of his inductive method; but Bacon's scientific knowledge and scientific conceptions were often very imperfect—more imperfect than they ought to have been for his time. Of one large part of science, which was just then beginning to be cultivated with high promise of success—

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the knowledge of the heavens—he speaks with a coldness and suspicion which contrasts remarkably with his eagerness about things belonging to the sphere of the earth and within reach of the senses. He holds, of course, the unity of the world; the laws of the whole visible universe are one order; but the heavens, wonderful as they are to him, are—compared with other things—out of his track of inquiry. He had his astronomical theories; he expounded them in his "*Descriptio Globi Intellectualis*" and his *Thema Cœli*. He was not altogether ignorant of what was going on in days when Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo were at work. But he did not know how to deal with it, and there were men in England, before and then, who understood much better than he the problems and the methods of astronomy. He had one conspicuous and strange defect for a man who undertook what he did. He was not a mathematician: he did not see the indispensable necessity of mathematics in the great *Instauration* which he projected; he did not much believe in what they could do. He cared so little about them that he takes no notice of Napier's invention of Logarithms. He was not able to trace how the direct information of the senses might be rightly subordinated to the rational, but not self-evident results of geometry and arithmetic. He was impatient of the subtleties of astronomical calculations; they only attempted to satisfy problems about the motion of bodies in the sky, and told us nothing of physical fact; they gave us, as Prometheus gave to Jove, the outside skin of the offering, which was stuffed inside with straw and rubbish. He entirely failed to see that before dealing with physical astronomy, it must be dealt with mathematically. "It is well to remark," as Mr. Ellis says, "that none of Newton's astronomical discoveries could have been

made if astronomers had not continued to render themselves liable to Bacon's censure." Bacon little thought that in navigation the compass itself would become a subordinate instrument compared with the helps given by mathematical astronomy. In this, and in other ways, Bacon rose above his time in his conceptions of what *might be*, but not of what *was*; the list is a long one, as given by Mr. Spedding (iii. 511), of the instances which show that he was ill-informed about the advances of knowledge in his own time. And his mind was often not clear when he came to deal with complex phenomena. Thus, though he constructed a table of specific gravities—"the only collection," says Mr. Ellis, "of quantitative experiments that we find in his works," and "wonderfully accurate considering the manner in which they were obtained;" yet he failed to understand the real nature of the famous experiment of Archimedes. And so with the larger features of his teaching it is impossible not to feel how imperfectly he had emancipated himself from the power of words and of common prepossessions; how for one reason or another he had failed to call himself to account in the terms he employed, and the assumptions on which he argued. The caution does not seem to have occurred to him that the statement of a fact may, in nine cases out of ten, involve a theory. His whole doctrine of "Forms" and "Simple natures," which is so prominent in his method of investigation, is an example of loose and slovenly use of unexamined and untested ideas. He allowed himself to think that it would be possible to arrive at an alphabet of nature, which, once attained, would suffice to spell out and constitute all its infinite combinations. He accepted, without thinking it worth a doubt, the doctrine of appetites and passions and inclinations and dislikes and horrors in

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inorganic nature. His whole physiology of life and death depends on a doctrine of animal spirits, of which he traces the operations and qualities as if they were as certain as the nerves or the blood, and of which he gives this account—"that in every tangible body there is a spirit covered and enveloped in the grosser body;" "not a virtue, not an energy, not an actuality, nor any such idle matter, but a body thin and invisible, and yet having place and dimension, and real." . . . "a middle nature between flame, which is momentary, and air which is permanent." Yet these are the very things for which he holds up Aristotle and the Scholastics and the Italian speculators to reprobation and scorn. The clearness of his thinking was often overlaid by the immense profusion of decorative material which his meditation brought along with it. The defect was greater than that which even his ablest defenders admit. It was more than that in that "greatest and radical difference, which he himself observes" between minds, the difference between minds which were apt to note *distinctions*, and those which were apt to note *likenesses*, he was, without knowing it, defective in the first. It was that in many instances he exemplified in his own work the very faults which he charged on the older philosophies: haste, carelessness, precipitancy, using words without thinking them out, assuming to know when he ought to have perceived his real ignorance.

What, then, with all these mistakes and failures, not always creditable or pardonable, has given Bacon his pre-eminent place in the history of science?

1. The answer is that with all his mistakes and failures, the principles on which his mode of attaining a knowledge of nature was based were the only true ones; and they had never before been propounded so systematically, so fully,

and so earnestly. His was not the first mind on whom these principles had broken. Men were, and had been for some time, pursuing their inquiries into various departments of nature precisely on the general plan of careful and honest observation of real things which he enjoined. They had seen, as he saw, the futility of all attempts at natural philosophy by mere thinking and arguing, without coming into contact with the contradictions or corrections or verifications of experience. In Italy, in Germany, in England there were laborious and successful workers, who had long felt that to be in touch with nature was the only way to know. But no one had yet come before the world to proclaim this on the house-tops, as the key of the only certain path to the secrets of nature, the watchword of a revolution in the methods of interpreting her; and this Bacon did with an imposing authority and power which enforced attention. He spoke the thoughts of patient toilers like Harvey with a largeness and richness which they could not command, and which they perhaps smiled at. He disentangled and spoke the vague thoughts of his age, which other men had not the courage and clearness of mind to formulate. What Bacon *did*, indeed, and what he *meant*, are separate matters. He *meant* an infallible method by which man should be fully equipped for a struggle with nature; he meant an irresistible and immediate conquest, within a definite and not distant time. It was too much. He himself saw no more of what he *meant* than Columbus did of America. But what he *did* was to persuade men for the future that the intelligent, patient, persevering cross-examination of things, and the thoughts about them, was the only, and was the successful road to know. No one had yet done this, and he did it. His writings were a public recognition of real science, in its humblest tasks

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about the commonplace facts before our feet, as well as in its loftiest achievements. "The man who is growing great and happy by electrifying a bottle," says Dr. Johnson, "wonders to see the world engaged in the prattle about peace and war," and the world was ready to smile at the simplicity or the impertinence of his enthusiasm. Bacon impressed upon the world for good, with every resource of subtle observation and forcible statement, that "the man who is growing great by electrifying a bottle" is as important a person in the world's affairs as the arbiter of peace and war.

2. Yet this is not all. An inferior man might have made himself the mouthpiece of the hopes and aspirations of his generation after a larger science. But to Bacon these aspirations embodied themselves in the form of a great and absorbing idea; an idea which took possession of the whole man, kindling in him a faith which nothing could quench, and a passion which nothing could dull; an idea which, for forty years, was his daily companion, his daily delight, his daily business; an idea which he was never tired of placing in ever fresh and more attractive lights, from which no trouble could wean him, about which no disaster could make him despair; an idea round which the instincts and intuitions and obstinate convictions of genius gathered, which kindled his rich imagination and was invested by it with a splendour and magnificence like the dreams of fable. It is this idea which finds its fitting expression in the grand and stately aphorisms of the *Novum Organum*, in the varied fields of interest in the *De Augmentis*, in the romance of the *New Atlantis*. It is this idea, this certainty of a new unexplored Kingdom of Knowledge within the reach and grasp of man, if he will be humble enough and patient enough and truthful enough

to occupy it—this announcement not only of a new system of thought, but of a change in the condition of the world—a prize and possession such as man had not yet imagined; this belief in the fortunes of the human race and its issue, “such an issue, it may be, as in the present condition of things and men’s minds cannot easily be conceived or imagined,” yet more than verified in the wonders which our eyes have seen—it is this which gives its prerogative to Bacon’s work. That he bungled about the processes of Induction, that he talked about an unintelligible doctrine of *Forms*, did not affect the weight and solemnity of his call to learn, so full of wisdom and good-sense, so sober and so solid, yet so audaciously confident. There had been nothing like it in its ardour of hope, in the glory which it threw around the investigation of nature. It was the presence and the power of a great idea—long become a commonplace to us, but strange and perplexing at first to his own generation, which probably shared Coke’s opinion that it qualified its champion for a place in the company of the “Ship of Fools,” which expressed its opinion of the man who wrote the *Novum Organum*, in the sentiment that “a fool *could* not have written it, and a wise man *would* not”—it is this which has placed Bacon among the great discoverers of the human race.

It is this imaginative yet serious assertion of the vast range and possibilities of human knowledge which, as M. de Rémusat remarks—the keenest and fairest of Bacon’s judges—gives Bacon his claim to the undefinable but very real character of greatness. Two men stand out, “the masters of those who know,” without equals up to their time, among men—the Greek Aristotle and the Englishman Bacon. They agree in the universality and comprehensiveness of their conception of human knowledge; and

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they were absolutely alone in their serious practical ambition to work out this conception. In the separate departments of thought, of investigation, of art, each is left far behind by numbers of men, who in these separate departments have gone far deeper than they, have soared higher, have been more successful in what they attempted. But Aristotle first, and for his time more successfully, and Bacon after him, ventured on the daring enterprise of "taking all knowledge for their province;" and in this they stood alone. This present scene of man's existence, this that we call nature, the stage on which mortal life begins and goes on and ends, the faculties with which man is equipped to act, to enjoy, to create, to hold his way amid or against the circumstances and forces round him—this is what each wants to know, as thoroughly and really as can be. It is not to reduce things to a theory or a system that they look around them on the place where they find themselves with life and thought and power; that were easily done, and has been done over and over again, only to prove its futility. It is to know, as to the whole and its parts, as men understand *knowing* in some one subject of successful handling, whether art or science or practical craft. This idea, this effort, distinguishes these two men. The Greeks—predecessors, contemporaries, successors of Aristotle—were speculators, full of clever and ingenious guesses, in which the amount of clear and certain fact was in lamentable disproportion to the schemes blown up from it; or they devoted themselves more profitably to some one or two subjects of inquiry, moral or purely intellectual, with absolute indifference to what might be asked, or what might be known, of the real conditions under which they were passing their existence. Some of the Romans, Cicero and Pliny, had encyclopædic minds; but the Roman

mind was the slave of precedent, and was more than satisfied with partially understanding and neatly arranging what the Greeks had left. The Arabians looked more widely about them; but the Arabians were essentially sceptics, and resigned subjects to the inevitable and the inexplicable; there was an irony, open or covert, in their philosophy, their terminology, their transcendental mysticism, which showed how little they believed that they really knew. The vast and mighty intellects of the schoolmen never came into a real grapple with the immensity of the facts of the natural or even of the moral world; within the world of abstract thought, the world of language, with its infinite growths and consequences, they have never had their match for keenness, for patience, for courage, for inexhaustible toil; but they were as much disconnected from the natural world, which was their stage of life, as if they had been disembodied spirits. The Renaissance brought with it not only the desire to know, but to know comprehensively and in all possible directions; it brought with it temptations to the awakened Italian genius, renewed, enlarged, refined, if not strengthened by its passage through the Middle Ages, to make thought deal with the real, and to understand the scene in which men were doing such strange and wonderful things; but Giordano Bruno, Telesio, Campanella, and their fellows, were not men capable of more than short flights, though they might be daring and eager ones. It required more thoroughness, more humble-minded industry, to match the magnitude of the task. And there have been men of universal minds and comprehensive knowledge since Bacon, Leibnitz, Goethe, Humboldt, men whose thoughts were at home everywhere, where there was something to be known. But even for them the world of knowledge has grown too large. We

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shall never again see an Aristotle or a Bacon, because the conditions of knowledge have altered. Bacon, like Aristotle, belonged to an age of adventure, which went to sea little knowing whither it went, and ill furnished with knowledge and instruments. He entered with a vast and vague scheme of discovery on these unknown seas and new worlds which to us are familiar, and daily traversed in every direction. This new world of knowledge has turned out in many ways very different from what Aristotle or Bacon supposed, and has been conquered by implements and weapons very different in precision and power from what they purposed to rely on. But the combination of patient and careful industry, with the courage and divination of genius, in doing what none had done before, makes it equally stupid and idle to impeach their greatness.

3. Bacon has been charged with bringing philosophy down from the heights, not as of old to make men know themselves, and to be the teacher of the highest form of truth, but to be the purveyor of material utility. It contemplates only, it is said, the "*commoda vitæ*," about the deeper and more elevating problems of thought it does not trouble itself. It concerns itself only about external and sensible nature, about what is "of the earth, earthy." But when it comes to the questions which have attracted the keenest and hardest thinkers, the question, what it is that thinks and wills—what is the origin and guarantee of the faculties by which men know anything at all and form rational and true conceptions about nature and themselves, whence it is that reason draws its powers and materials and rules—what is the meaning of words which all use but few can explain—Time and Space, and Being and Cause, and consciousness and choice, and the moral law—Bacon is content with a loose and superficial treatment

of them. Bacon certainly was not a metaphysician, nor an exact and lucid reasoner. With wonderful flashes of sure intuition or happy anticipation, his mind was deficient in the powers which deal with the deeper problems of thought, just as it was deficient in the mathematical faculty. The subtlety, the intuition, the penetration, the severe precision, even the force of imagination, which make a man a great thinker on any abstract subject were not his; the interest of questions which had interested metaphysicians had no interest for him: he distrusted and undervalued them. When he touches the "ultimities" of knowledge he is as obscure and hard to be understood as any of those restless Southern Italians of his own age, who shared with him the ambition of reconstructing science. Certainly the science which most interested Bacon, the science which he found, as he thought, in so desperate a condition, and to which he gave so great an impulse, was physical science. But physical science may be looked at and pursued in different ways, in different tempers, with different objects. It may be followed in the spirit of Newton, of Boyle, of Herschel, of Faraday; or with a confined and low horizon it may be dwarfed and shrivelled into a mean utilitarianism. But Bacon's horizon was not a narrow one. He believed in God and immortality and the Christian creed and hope. To him the restoration of the Reign of Man was a noble enterprise, because man was so great and belonged to so great an order of things, because the things which he was bid to search into with honesty and truthfulness were the works and laws of God, because it was so shameful and so miserable that from an ignorance which industry and good-sense could remedy, the tribes of mankind passed their days in self-imposed darkness and helplessness. It was God's appointment that men should go through this earth-

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ly stage of their being. Each stage of man's mysterious existence had to be dealt with, not according to his own fancies, but according to the conditions imposed on it; and it was one of man's first duties to arrange for his stay on earth according to the real laws which he could find out if he only sought for them. Doubtless it was one of Bacon's highest hopes that from the growth of true knowledge would follow in surprising ways the relief of man's estate; this, as an end, runs through all his yearning after a fuller and surer method of interpreting nature. The desire to be a great benefactor, the spirit of sympathy and pity for mankind, reign through this portion of his work—pity for confidence so greatly abused by the teachers of man, pity for ignorance which might be dispelled, pity for pain and misery which might be relieved. In the quaint but beautiful picture of courtesy, kindness, and wisdom, which he imagines in the *New Atlantis*, the representative of true philosophy, the "Father of Solomon's House," is introduced as one who "had an aspect as if he pitied men." But unless it is utilitarianism to be keenly alive to the needs and pains of life, and to be eager and busy to lighten and assuage them, Bacon's philosophy was not utilitarian. It may deserve many reproaches, but not this one. Such a passage as the following—in which are combined the highest motives and graces and passions of the soul, love of truth, humility of mind, purity of purpose, reverence for God, sympathy for man, compassion for the sorrows of the world and longing to heal them, depth of conviction and faith—fairly represents the spirit which runs through his works. After urging the mistaken use of imagination and authority in science, he goes on—

"There is not and never will be an end or limit to this; one catches at one thing, another at another; each has his favourite

fancy; pure and open light there is none; every one philosophises out of the cells of his own imagination, as out of Plato's cave; the higher wits with more acuteness and felicity, the duller, less happily, but with equal pertinacity. And now of late, by the regulation of some learned and (as things now are) excellent men (the former license having, I suppose, become wearisome), the sciences are confined to certain and prescribed authors, and thus restrained are imposed upon the old and instilled into the young; so that now (to use the sarcasm of Cicero concerning Cæsar's year) the constellation of *Lyra* rises by edict, and authority is taken for truth, not truth for authority. Which kind of institution and discipline is excellent for present use, but precludes all prospect of improvement. For we copy the sin of our first parents while we suffer for it. They wished to be like God, but their posterity wish to be even greater. For we create worlds, we direct and domineer over nature, we will have it that all things *are* as in our folly we think they should be, not as seems fittest to the Divine wisdom, or as they are found to be in fact; and I know not whether we more distort the facts of nature or of our own wits; but we clearly impress the stamp of our own image on the creatures and works of God, instead of carefully examining and recognising in them the stamp of the Creator himself. Wherefore our dominion over creatures is a second time forfeited, not undeservedly; and whereas after the fall of man some power over the resistance of creatures was still left to him—the power of subduing and managing them by true and solid arts—yet this too through our insolence, and because we desire to be like God and to follow the dictates of our own reason, we in great part lose. If, therefore, there be any humility towards the Creator, any reverence for or disposition to magnify His works, any charity for man and anxiety to relieve his sorrows and necessities, any love of truth in nature, any hatred of darkness, any desire for the purification of the understanding, we must entreat men again and again to discard, or at least set apart for a while, these volatile and preposterous philosophies which have preferred theses to hypotheses, led experience captive, and triumphed over the works of God; and to approach with humility and veneration to unroll the volume of Creation, to linger and meditate therein, and with minds washed clean from opinions to study it in purity and integrity. For this is that sound and language which “went forth into all lands,” and did not

incur the confusion of Babel; this should men study to be perfect in, and becoming again as little children condescend to take the alphabet of it into their hands, and spare no pains to search and unravel the interpretation thereof, but pursue it strenuously and persevere even unto death."—Preface to *Historia Naturalis*: translated, *Works*, v. 132–3.

CHAPTER IX.

BACON AS A WRITER.

BACON'S name belongs to letters as well as to philosophy. In his own day, whatever his contemporaries thought of his *Instauration of Knowledge*, he was in the first rank as a speaker and a writer. Sir Walter Raleigh, contrasting him with Salisbury, who could speak but not write, and Northampton, who could write but not speak, thought Bacon eminent both as a speaker and a writer. Ben Jonson, passing in review the more famous names of his own and the preceding age, from Sir Thomas More to Sir Philip Sidney, Hooker, Essex, and Raleigh, places Bacon without a rival at the head of the company as the man who had "fulfilled all numbers," and "stood as the mark and ἀκμή of our language." And he also records Bacon's power as a speaker. "No man," he says, "ever spoke more neatly, more pressly, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered." . . . "His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss. He commanded when he spoke, and had his judges angry and pleased at his devotion . . . the fear of every man that heard him was that he should make an end." He notices one feature for which we are less prepared, though we know that the edge of Bacon's sarcastic tongue was felt and represented in James's Court. "His speech," says Ben Jonson, "was nobly censorious when he could spare and pass by a

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jest." The unpopularity which certainly seems to have gathered round his name may have had something to do with this reputation.

Yet as an English writer Bacon did not expect to be remembered, and he hardly cared to be. He wrote much in Latin, and his first care was to have his books put into a Latin dress. "For these modern languages," he wrote to Toby Matthews towards the close of his life, "will at one time or another play the bank-rowte with books, and since I have lost much time with this age, I would be glad if God would give me leave to recover it with posterity." He wanted to be read by the learned out of England, who were supposed to appreciate his philosophical ideas better than his own countrymen, and the only way to this was to have his books translated into the "general language." He sends Prince Charles the *Advancement* in its new Latin dress. "It is a book," he says, "that will live, and be a citizen of the world, as English books are not." And he fitted it for continental reading by carefully weeding it of all passages that might give offence to the censors at Rome or Paris. "I have been," he writes to the King, "mine own *Index Expurgatorius*, that it may be read in all places. For since my end of putting it in Latin was to have it read everywhere, it had been an absurd contradiction to free it in the language and to pen it up in the matter." Even the *Essays* and the *History of Henry VII.* he had put into Latin "by some good pens that do not forsake me." Among these translators are said to have been George Herbert and Hobbes, and on more doubtful authority, Ben Jonson and Selden. The *Essays* were also translated into Latin and Italian with Bacon's sanction.

Bacon's contemptuous and hopeless estimate of "these modern languages," forty years after Spenser had pro-

claimed and justified his faith in his own language, is only one of the proofs of the short-sightedness of the wisest and the limitations of the largest-minded. Perhaps we ought not to wonder at his silence about Shakespeare. It was the fashion, except among a set of clever but not always very reputable people, to think the stage, as it was, below the notice of scholars and statesmen; and Shakespeare took no trouble to save his works from neglect. Yet it is a curious defect in Bacon that he should not have been more alive to the powers and future of his own language. He early and all along was profoundly impressed with the contrast, which the scholarship of the age so abundantly presented, of words to things. He dwells in the *Advancement* on that "first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter." He illustrates it at large from the reaction of the new learning and of the popular teaching of the Reformation against the utilitarian and unclassical terminology of the schoolmen; a reaction which soon grew to excess, and made men "hunt more after choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses," than after worth of subject, soundness of argument, "life of invention or depth of judgment." "I have represented this," he says, "in an example of late times, but it hath been and will be *secundum majus et minus* in all times;" and he likens this "vanity" to "Pygmalion's frenzy"—"for to fall in love with words which are but the images of matter, is all one as to fall in love with a picture." He was dissatisfied with the first attempt at translation into Latin of the *Advancement* by Dr. Playfer of Cambridge, because he "desired not so much neat and polite, as clear, masculine, and apt expression." Yet, with this hatred of circumlocution and prettiness, of the cloudy amplifications,

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and pompous flourishings, and "the flowing and watery vein," which the scholars of his time affected, it is strange that he should not have seen that the new ideas and widening thoughts of which he was the herald would want a much more elastic and more freely-working instrument than Latin could ever become. It is wonderful indeed what can be done with Latin. It was long after his day to be the language of the exact sciences. In his *History of the Winds*, which is full of his irrepressible fancy and picturesqueness, Bacon describes in clear and intelligible Latin the details of the rigging of a modern man-of-war, and the mode of sailing her. But such tasks impose a yoke, sometimes a rough one, on a language which has "taken its ply" in very different conditions, and of which the genius is that of indirect and circuitous expression, "full of majesty and circumstance." But it never, even in those days of scholarship, could lend itself to the frankness, the straightforwardness, the fulness and shades of suggestion and association, with which, in handling ideas of subtlety and difficulty, a writer would wish to speak to his reader, and which he could find only in his mother tongue. It might have been thought that with Bacon's contempt of form and ceremony in these matters, his consciousness of the powers of English in his hands might have led him to anticipate that a flexible and rich and strong language might create a literature, and that a literature, if worth studying, would be studied in its own language. But so great a change was beyond even his daring thoughts. To him, as to his age, the only safe language was the Latin. For familiar use English was well enough. But it could not be trusted; "it would play the bankrupt with books." And yet Galileo was writing in Italian as well as in Latin; only within twenty-five years later, Descartes was writing *De la Mé-*

thode, and Pascal was writing in the same French in which he wrote the *Provincial Letters*, his *Nouvelles Expériences touchant le Vide*, and the controversial pamphlets which followed it; showing how in that interval of five-and-twenty years an instrument had been fashioned out of a modern language such as for lucid expression and clear reasoning, Bacon had not yet dreamed of. From Bacon to Pascal is the change from the old scientific way of writing to the modern; from a modern language, as learned and used in the 16th century, to one learned in the 17th.

But the language of the age of Elizabeth was a rich and noble one, and it reached a high point in the hands of Bacon. In his hands it lent itself to many uses, and assumed many forms, and he valued it, not because he thought highly of its qualities as a language, but because it enabled him with least trouble "to speak as he would," in throwing off the abundant thoughts that rose within his mind, and in going through the variety of business which could not be done in Latin. But in all his writing it is the matter, the real thing that he wanted to say, which was uppermost. He cared how it was said, not for the sake of form or ornament, but because the force and clearness of what was said depended so much on how it was said. Of course, what he wanted to say varied indefinitely with the various occasions of his life. His business may merely be to write "a device" or panegyric for a pageant in the Queen's honour, or for the revels of Gray's Inn. But even these trifles are the result of real thought, and are full of ideas—ideas about the hopes of knowledge or about the policy of the State; and though, of course, they have plenty of the flourishes and quaint absurdities indispensable on such occasions, yet the "rhetorical affectation" is in the thing itself, and not in the way it is handled; he had an opportunity of saying

some of the things which were to him of deep and perpetual interest, and he used it to say them, as forcibly, as strikingly, as attractively as he could. His manner of writing depends, not on a style, or a studied or acquired habit, but on the nature of the task which he has in hand. Everywhere his matter is close to his words, and governs, animates, informs his words. No one in England before had so much as he had the power to say what he wanted to say, and exactly as he wanted to say it. No one was so little at the mercy of conventional language or customary rhetoric, except when he persuaded himself that he had to submit to those necessities of flattery, which cost him at last so dear.

The book by which English readers, from his own time to ours, have known him best, better than by the originality and the eloquence of the *Advancement*, or than by the political weight and historical imagination of the *History of Henry VII.*, is the first book which he published, the volume of *Essays*. It is an instance of his self-willed but most skilful use of the freedom and ease which the "modern language," which he despised, gave him. It is obvious that he might have expanded these "Counsels, moral and political," to the size which such essays used to swell to after his time. Many people would have thanked him for doing so; and some have thought it a good book on which to hang their own reflections and illustrations. But he saw how much could be done by leaving the beaten track of set treatise and discourse, and setting down unceremoniously the observations which he had made, and the real rules which he had felt to be true, on various practical matters which come home to men's "business and bosoms." He was very fond of these moral and political generalisations, both of his own collecting and as

found in writers who, he thought, had the right to make them, like the Latins of the Empire and the Italians and Spaniards of the Renaissance. But a mere string of maxims and quotations would have been a poor thing and not new; and he cast what he had to say into connected wholes. But nothing can be more loose than the structure of the essays. There is no art, no style, almost, except in a few—the political ones—no order: thoughts are put down and left unsupported, unproved, undeveloped. In the first form of the ten, which composed the first edition of 1597, they are more like notes of analysis or tables of contents; they are austere even to meagreness. But the general character continues in the enlarged and expanded ones of Bacon's later years. They are like chapters in Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Rhetoric* on virtues and characters; only Bacon's takes Aristotle's broad marking lines as drawn, and proceeds with the subtler and more refined observations of a much longer and wider experience. But these short papers say what they have to say without preface, and in literary undress, without a superfluous word, without the joints and bands of structure; they say it in brief, rapid sentences, which come down, sentence after sentence, like the strokes of a great hammer. No wonder that in their disdainful brevity they seem rugged and abrupt, "and do not seem to end, but fall." But with their truth and piercingness and delicacy of observation, their roughness gives a kind of flavour which no elaboration could give. It is none the less that their wisdom is of a somewhat cynical kind, fully alive to the slipperiness and self-deceits and faithlessness which are in the world and rather inclined to be amused at them. In some we can see distinct records of the writer's own experience: one contains the substance of a charge deliv-

ered to Judge Hutton on his appointment; another of them is a sketch drawn from life of a character which had crossed Bacon's path, and in the essay on *Seeming Wise* we can trace from the impatient notes put down in his *Commentarius Solutus*, the picture of the man who stood in his way, the Attorney-General Hobart. Some of them are memorable oracular utterances not inadequate to the subject, on *Truth or Death or Unity*. Others reveal an utter incapacity to come near a subject, except as a strange external phenomena, like the essay on *Love*. There is a distinct tendency in them to the Italian school of political and moral wisdom, the wisdom of distrust and of reliance on indirect and roundabout ways. There is a group of them, "of *Delays*," "of *Cunning*," "of *Wisdom for a Man's Self*," "of *Despatch*," which show how vigilantly and to what purpose he had watched the treasurers and secretaries and intriguers of Elizabeth's and James's Courts; and there are curious self-revelations, as in the essay on *Friendship*. But there are also currents of better and larger feeling, such as those which show his own ideal of "*Great Place*," and what he felt of its dangers and duties. And mixed with the fantastic taste and conceits of the time, there is evidence in them of Bacon's keen delight in nature, in the beauty and scents of flowers, in the charm of open-air life, as in the essay on *Gardens*, "The purest of human pleasures, the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man."

But he had another manner of writing for what he held to be his more serious work. In the philosophical and historical works there is no want of attention to the flow and order and ornament of composition. When we come to the *Advancement of Learning*, we come to a book which is one of the landmarks of what high thought and rich im-

agination have made of the English language. It is the first great book in English prose of secular interest; the first book which can claim a place beside the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. As regards its subject-matter, it has been partly thrown into the shade by the greatly enlarged and elaborate form in which it ultimately appeared, in a Latin dress, as the first portion of the scheme of the *Instauratio*, the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*. Bacon looked on it as a first effort, a kind of call-bell to awaken and attract the interest of others in the thoughts and hopes which so interested himself. But it contains some of his finest writing. In the *Essays* he writes as a looker-on at the game of human affairs, who, according to his frequent illustration, sees more of it than the gainsters themselves, and is able to give wiser and faithful counsel, not without a touch of kindly irony at the mistakes which he observes. In the *Advancement* he is the enthusiast for a great cause and a great hope, and all that he has of passion and power is enlisted in the effort to advance it. The *Advancement* is far from being a perfect book. As a survey of the actual state of knowledge in his day, of its deficiencies, and what was wanted to supply them, it is not even up to the materials of the time. Even the improved *De Augmentis* is inadequate; and there is reason to think the *Advancement* was a hurried book, at least in the later part, and it is defective in arrangement and proportion of parts. Two of the great divisions of knowledge—history and poetry—are despatched in comparatively short chapters; while in the division on "Civil Knowledge," human knowledge as it respects society, he inserts a long essay, obviously complete in itself and clumsily thrust in here, on the ways of getting on in the world, the means by which a man may be "*Faber fortunæ suæ*"—the architect of his own suc-

cess; too lively a picture to be pleasant of the arts with which he had become acquainted in the process of rising. The book, too, has the blemishes of its own time; its want of simplicity, its inevitable though very often amusing and curious pedantries. But the *Advancement* was the first of a long line of books which have attempted to teach English readers how to think of knowledge; to make it really and intelligently the interest, not of the school or the study or the laboratory only, but of society at large. It was a book with a purpose, new then, but of which we have seen the fulfilment. He wanted to impress on his generation, as a very practical matter, all that knowledge might do in wise hands, all that knowledge had lost by the faults and errors of men and the misfortunes of time. all that knowledge might be pushed to in all directions by faithful and patient industry and well-planned methods for the elevation and benefit of man in his highest capacities as well as in his humblest. And he further sought to teach them *how* to know; to make them understand that difficult achievement of self-knowledge, to know *what it is* to know; to give the first attempted chart to guide them among the shallows and rocks and whirlpools which beset the course and action of thought and inquiry; to reveal to them the "idols" which unconsciously haunt the minds of the strongest as well as the weakest, and interpose their delusions when we are least aware—"the fallacies and false appearances inseparable from our nature and our condition of life." To induce men to believe not only that there was much to know that was not yet dreamed of, but that the way of knowing needed real and thorough improvement; that the knowing mind bore along with it all kinds of snares and disqualifications of which it is unconscious; and that it needed training quite as much as mate-

rials to work on, was the object of the *Advancement*. It was but a sketch; but it was a sketch so truly and forcibly drawn, that it made an impression which has never been weakened. To us its use and almost its interest is passed. But it is a book which we can never open without coming on some noble interpretation of the realities of nature or the mind; some unexpected discovery of that quick and keen eye which arrests us by its truth; some felicitous and unthought-of illustration, yet so natural as almost to be doomed to become a commonplace; some bright touch of his incorrigible imaginativeness, ever ready to force itself in amid the driest details of his argument.

The *Advancement* was only one shape out of many into which he cast his thoughts. Bacon was not easily satisfied with his work; even when he published he did so, not because he had brought his work to the desired point, but lest anything should happen to him and it should "perish." Easy and unstudied as his writing seems, it was, as we have seen, the result of unintermitted trouble and varied modes of working. He was quite as much a talker as a writer, and beat out his thoughts into shape in talking. In the essay on *Friendship* he describes the process with a vividness which tells of his own experience—

"But before you come to that [the faithful counsel that a man receiveth from his friend], certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another. He tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself, and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the King of Persia, 'That speech was like cloth of arras opened and put abroad, whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thought they lie in packs.' Neither is this second

fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel. (They are, indeed, best.) But even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits against a stone which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a *statua* or a picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother."

Bacon, as has been said, was a great maker of notes and note-books: he was careful not of the thought only, but of the very words in which it presented itself; everything was collected that might turn out useful in his writing or speaking, down to alternative modes of beginning or connecting or ending a sentence. He watched over his intellectual appliances and resources much more strictly than over his money concerns. He never threw away and never forgot what could be turned to account. He was never afraid of repeating himself, if he thought he had something apt to say. He was never tired of recasting and rewriting, from a mere fragment or preface to a finished paper. He has favourite images, favourite maxims, favourite texts, which he cannot do without. "*Da Fidei quæ sunt Fidei*" comes in from his first book to his last. The illustrations which he gets from the myth of Scylla, from Atalanta's ball, from Borgia's saying about the French marking their lodgings with chalk, the saying that God takes delight, like the "innocent play of children," "to hide his works in order to have them found out," and to have kings as "his playfellows in that game," these, with many others, reappear, however varied the context, from the first to the last of his compositions. An edition of Bacon, with marginal references and parallel passages, would show a more persistent recurrence of characteristic illustrations and sentences than perhaps any other writer.

The *Advancement* was followed by attempts to give serious effect to its lesson. This was nearly all done in Latin. He did so, because in these works he spoke to a larger and, as he thought, more interested audience; the use of Latin marked the gravity of his subject as one that touched all mankind; and the majesty of Latin suited his taste and his thoughts. Bacon spoke, indeed, impressively on the necessity of entering into the realm of knowledge in the spirit of a little child. He dwelt on the paramount importance of beginning from the very bottom of the scale of fact, of understanding the commonplace things at our feet, so full of wonder and mystery and instruction, before venturing on theories. The sun is not polluted by shining on a dunghill, and no facts were too ignoble to be beneath the notice of the true student of nature. But his own genius was for the grandeur and pomp of general views. The practical details of experimental science were, except in partial instances, yet a great way off; and what there was, he either did not care about or really understand, and had no aptitude for handling. He knew enough to give reality to his argument; he knew, and insisted on it, that the labour of observation and experiment would have to be very heavy and quite indispensable. But his own business was with great principles and new truths; these were what had the real attraction for him; it was the magnificent thoughts and boundless hopes of the approaching "kingdom of man" which kindled his imagination and fired his ambition. "He writes philosophy," said Harvey, who had come to his own great discovery through patient and obscure experiments on frogs and monkeys—"he writes philosophy like a Lord Chancellor." And for this part of the work, the stateliness and dignity of the Latin corresponded to the proud claims which he made

for his conception of the knowledge which was to be. English seemed to him too homely to express the hopes of the world, too unstable to be trusted with them. Latin was the language of command and law. His Latin, without enslaving itself to Ciceronian types, and with a free infusion of barbarous but most convenient words from the vast and ingenious terminology of the schoolmen, is singularly forcible and expressive. It is almost always easy and clear; it can be vague and general, and it can be very precise where precision is wanted. It can, on occasion, be magnificent, and its gravity is continually enlivened by the play upon it, as upon a background, of his picturesque and unexpected fancies. The exposition of his philosophical principles was attempted in two forms. He began in English. He began, in the shape of a personal account, a statement of a series of conclusions to which his thinking had brought him, which he called the "Clue of the Labyrinth," *Filum Labyrinthi*. But he laid this aside unfinished, and rewrote and completed it in Latin, with the title *Cogitata et Visa*. It gains by being in Latin; as Mr. Spedding says, "it must certainly be reckoned among the most perfect of Bacon's productions." The personal form with each paragraph begins and ends. "*Franciscus Bacon sic cogitavit . . . itaque visum est ei*," gives to it a special tone of serious conviction, and brings the interest of the subject more keenly to the reader. It has the same kind of personal interest, only more solemn and commanding, which there is in Descartes's *Discours de la Méthode*. In this form Bacon meant at first to publish. He sent it to his usual critics, Sir Thomas Bodley, Toby Matthews, and Bishop Andrewes. And he meant to follow it up with a practical exemplification of his method. But he changed his plan. He had more than once ex-

pressed his preference for the form of *aphorisms* over the argumentative and didactic continuity of a set discourse. He had, indeed, already twice begun a series of aphorisms on the true methods of interpreting nature, and directing the mind in the true path of knowledge, and had begun them with the same famous aphorism with which the *Novum Organum* opens. He now reverted to the form of the aphorism, and resolved to throw the materials of the *Cogitata et Visa* into this shape. The result is the *Novum Organum*. It contains, with large additions, the substance of the treatise, but broken up and rearranged in the new form of separate impersonal generalised observations. The points and assertions and issues which, in a continuous discourse, careful readers mark and careless ones miss, are one by one picked out and brought separately to the light. It begins with brief, oracular, unproved maxims and propositions, and goes on gradually into larger developments and explanations. The aphorisms are meant to strike, to awaken questions, to disturb prejudices, to let in light into a nest of unsuspected intellectual confusions and self-misunderstandings, to be the mottoes and watchwords of many a laborious and difficult inquiry. They form a connected and ordered chain, though the ties between each link are not given. In this way Bacon put forth his proclamation of war on all that then called itself science; his announcement that the whole work of solid knowledge must be begun afresh, and by a new, and, as he thought, infallible method. On this work Bacon concentrated all his care. It was twelve years in hand, and twelve times underwent his revision. "In the first book especially," says Mr. Ellis, "every word seems to have been carefully weighed; and it would be hard to omit or change anything without injuring the meaning which Bacon in-

tended to convey." Severe as it is, it is instinct with enthusiasm, sometimes with passion. The Latin in which it is written answers to it; it has the conciseness, the breadth, the lordliness of a great piece of philosophical legislation.

The world has agreed to date from Bacon the systematic reform of natural philosophy, the beginning of an intelligent attempt, which has been crowned by such signal success, to place the investigation of nature on a solid foundation. On purely scientific grounds his title to this great honour may require considerable qualification. What one thing, it is asked, would not have been discovered in the age of Galileo and Harvey, if Bacon had never written? What one scientific discovery can be traced to him, or to the observance of his peculiar rules? It was something, indeed, to have conceived, as clearly as he conceived it, the large and comprehensive idea of what natural knowledge must be, and must rest upon, even if he were not able to realise his idea, and were mistaken in his practical methods of reform. But great ideas and great principles need their adequate interpreter, their *vates sacer*, if they are to influence the history of mankind. This was what Bacon was to science, to that great change in the thoughts and activity of men in relation to the world of nature around them: and this is his title to the great place assigned to him. He not only understood and felt what science might be, but he was able to make others—and it was no easy task beforehand, while the wonders of discovery were yet in the future—understand and feel it too. And he was able to do this because he was one of the most wonderful of thinkers and one of the greatest of writers. The disclosure, the interpretation, the development of that great intellectual revolution which was in the air, and which was practically carried forward in obscurity, day by day, by the fathers of modern astronomy and chemistry and physiology, had fallen to the task of a genius, sec-

ond only to Shakespeare. He had the power to tell the story of what they were doing and were to do with a force of imaginative reason of which they were utterly incapable. He was able to justify their attempts and their hopes as they themselves could not. He was able to interest the world in the great prospects opening on it, but of which none but a few students had the key. The calculations of the astronomer, the investigations of the physician, were more or less a subject of talk, as curious or possibly useful employments. But that which bound them together in the unity of science, which gave them their meaning beyond themselves, which raised them to a higher level and gave them their real dignity among the pursuits of men, which forced all thinking men to see what new and unsuspected possibilities in the knowledge and in the condition of mankind were opened before them, was not Bacon's own attempts at science, not even his collections of facts and his rules of method, but that great idea of the reality and boundless worth of knowledge which Bacon's penetrating and sure intuition had discerned, and which had taken possession of his whole nature. The impulse which he gave to the progress of science came from his magnificent and varied exposition of this idea; from his series of grand and memorable generalisations on the habits and faults of the human mind—on the difficult and yet so obvious and so natural precautions necessary to guide it in the true and hopeful track. It came from the attractiveness, the enthusiasm, and the persuasiveness of the pleading; from the clear and forcible statements, the sustained eloquence, the generous hopes, the deep and earnest purpose of the *Advancement* and the *De Augmentis*; from the nobleness, the originality, the picturesqueness, the impressive and irresistible truth of the great aphorisms of the *Novum Organum*.

THE END.

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